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MARCH 2004

neatoday

The Magazine of the National Education Association

B is for Budget Cuts

J is for Job:
How Your Job Market Stacks Up

O is for Online Search

M is for Moving

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PHOTO TOP: JIM HARRISON; SMALL PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM RIGHT: DON MILICI; MICHAEL YORK; GARY KAZANJIAN; ILLUSTRATION: KEITH SKEEN

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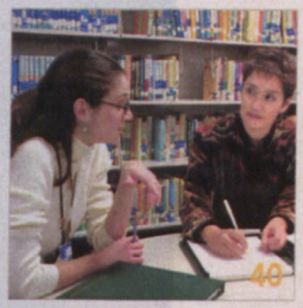

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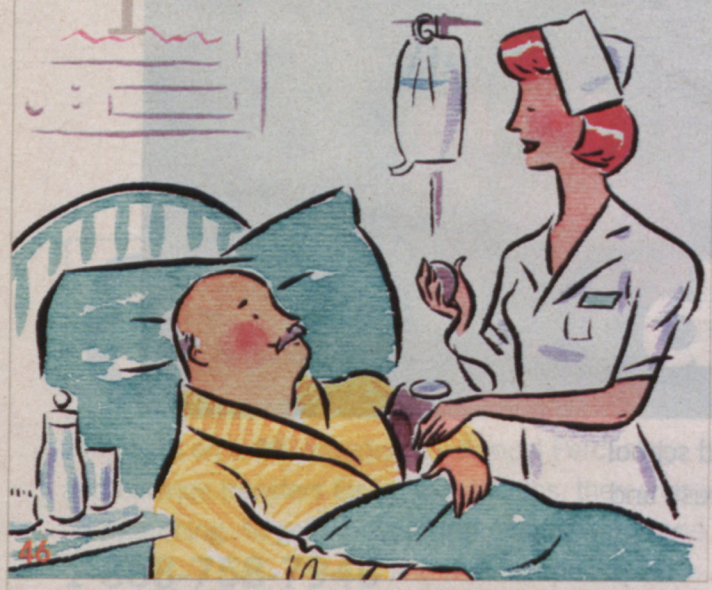

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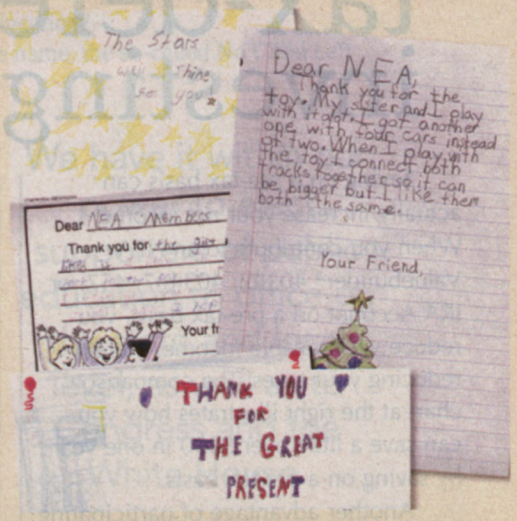
PHOTOS THIS PAGE TOP LEFT: MANGINELLI PRODUCTIONS; RIGHT FROM TOP: CHRISTIAN GOODEN; DALE FOLKERTS; STEPHEN PINGRY; ILLUSTRATION: ELWOOD SMITH

Writing on the Wall

I may be wrong—and I'm sure you, our readers, will let me know—in believing that penmanship is tremendously egalitarian. It doesn't definitively reveal a student to be rich or poor, studious or not, or boy or girl (OK, until you see little hearts dotting the I's). It's only the words themselves that offer clues about the author. And recently, we received word from students in West Virginia that told us a lot. ¶ For the holidays, NEA employees donated hundreds of toys, books, and school supplies, plus money for food vouchers to students in poor areas. In mid-December, the unwrapped gifts were delivered to West Virginia's Kimball Elementary, among others, and laid out for the children. Now, anyone who's been to, say, a mall would reflexively fear that chaos would ensue. But no, the children were quiet, contemplative, as they walked among the gifts. One child selected supplies that could be shared with a sibling, a packet of barrettes (and was gently sent back to choose a toy, too). Another took only a few pieces from a building set before being told he could have the whole package. ¶ "Thanks for my game," wrote one little girl in a packet of thank-yous sent to NEA. "I chose this because I had been wanting that. You are a blessing to us because I would not have got any toys." ¶ "Thank you for the gift," wrote another. "I play with it. I put it back in the box when I'm done. And I hope you come back to our school again. The stars will shine for you!" ¶ These children, rich in spirit, were poor in pocket. But if you were to post their writings on a wall, at first glance the poverty of their situation would be masked. Their handwriting was as nice as any seen in schools in middle-class or wealthy areas. Maybe it's that kind of superficial scrutiny of school situations that's led politicians to fall short on funding for Head Start and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (see page 10), which will shortchange millions of poor children. ¶ We here at NEA felt great that we brightened a holiday by whipping out our credit cards a few extra times. But helping these children on a larger scale, by working to change laws and get adequate funding for education and conveying your frontline issues to policy makers and the public, is what drives us year-round. And the letters from Kimball Elementary students have spurred us on—because we can read their writing on the wall.


The Stars will shine for you!
Dear NEA Members
Thank you for the gift
Your fr
Dear NEA,
I thank you for the toy. My sister and I play with it a lot. I got another one with toy cars instead of two. When I play with the toy I connect both tracks together so it can be bigger but I like them both the same.
Your Friend,
THANK YOU FOR THE GREAT PRESENT

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Biweekly Net Income	$712	$700

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Great Public Schools for Every Child

Is the glass half-full or half-empty? It's all in how you look at it

I learned a long time ago that I could tell the optimists from the pessimists simply by asking: Is the glass half-full or half-empty? It's all in how you look at it—an important point to keep in mind as we consider different perceptions of the state of public education today.

Me, I'm an optimist. And when it comes to public education, so are most Americans.

Most Americans give their local school—the face of public education they know best—a "B" or better. While they support standards and accountability, they also know that teachers are the key to quality—teachers who know their subject as well as how to teach. And they support paying teachers more even if it means raising taxes.

Most Americans favor other changes that would improve public education as well. Universal preschool. Small classes that permit individualized attention. Involved parents. Up-to-date textbooks and teaching materials. Schools that are in good repair and equipped with modern technology.

In short, the public and NEA are on the same page. We agree that the glass is more than half-full—public education is in good shape and getting better. But the powers-that-be in Washington see it differently. When they look into the glass, they see rock bottom.

With such widely diverging perceptions, it's tempting to think someone's picked up the wrong glass. But that's not it. The truth, my friends, is that we fail to see eye-to-eye because Washington is in the grip of ideologues who sing only one song: privatization.

They are driven by a market philosophy that assumes anything the public sector does, the private sector can do better. It's a popular song with the investor class, but doesn't do a thing for working people like us.

Like chameleons, the color-changing reptiles, the ideologues try to blend in. They cloak themselves in compassionate rhetoric—"leave no child behind" and the like—while laying the groundwork for radical change. And what better place to start than by undermining confidence in public education?

Other than the name, the so-called No Child Left Behind law is an ill-conceived piece of work. Instead of supporting the weakest link and helping the chain grow stronger, it seeks to batter the chain until it falls apart.

> We have it within our power to elect supporters of public education to office on the state and local level, as well as to Congress and the White House.
>
> —REG WEAVER

This year, one-fourth of America's schools were labeled failures for lack of "adequate yearly progress." Next year, there will be more. Already, parents are receiving notices that their children are being taught by someone who is not "highly qualified." Next year, there will be more. And, if the ideologues have their way, this will continue until confidence in public education is so shaken the people throw up their hands and cry, "Let the market decide!"

NEA is determined not to let that happen—and we're not alone. With 2.7 million teachers and education support professionals nationwide—roughly one out of every 100 Americans—we have it within our power to send the ideologues packing. We have it within our power to elect supporters of public education to office on the state and local level, as well as to Congress and the White House.

But NEA has that power only because of you—who you are and what you do. From the start, America's schools have been endowed with civic as well as academic functions that instill a shared sense of purpose and bind our nation together.

America can't do without that any more than NEA can do without you!

NEA PRESIDENT REG WEAVER

PHOTO: SANDY SCHAEFFER

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FEBRUARY 2004
neatoday
The Magazine of the National Education
Is this essential ingredient missing from ESEA's recipe for student achievement? Educators say absolutely.
joy OF READING
joy OF READING

Joy? Work at It

I read with interest your February cover story ("Saving the Joy") about keeping the joy of reading alive under ESEA. I have a few observations. If a sophomore enters my class announcing she doesn't like to read, I view it as a challenge. I ask her what her likes and dislikes are, what genre of movies she prefers, what TV shows she watches, and what section of the newspaper she reads—then I show her my bounty. Yes, I've got the classics, but I also have a comprehensive selection of romances, mysteries, horror, and other genres. Moving a student from a romance novel to a classic like *Emma* is as smooth as silk because the fabric has already been woven. If a student likes Raymond Chandler, it's a natural transition to Sherlock Holmes.

You can't force a child to read the classics. He will go to sparknotes.com or read great book summaries and turn in a standard book report. But if he finds a book he cherishes, he will write an excellent report, surprising his teacher with plot diagram, theme analysis, and examples of literary devices. As students read bestsellers, contemporary fiction, and other high-interest books, they discover reading is a life force and they come back for more.

ROSEMARY EISMANN
Modesto, California

THANKS FOR THE FEBRUARY issue on reading. Unfortunately, character education and enjoyment are being taken out of the curriculum due to the current testing frenzy. What is the point of teaching and learning if joy is absent from the classroom?

Students should be able to experience a balance between direct teaching and student-centered learning so they will be motivated to become lifelong learners. Government "educrats" seem to forget that schools can combine academic rigor with a love for learning. Moreover, this obsession with test-driven instruction is insulting to the creative and versatile intelligence of modern-day students and teachers. Hopefully, state testing will one day be just one of many factors used in the equation to grade schools.

CHRISTIAN P. MILORD
Fullerton, California

IN MANY SCHOOLS, the children enter first grade knowing how to read and do math. Not at our school. We work hard teaching our students to read. We've even helped our students become authors, "publishing" their work on our school Web site.

But this year we are on the AYP list. Once again, we are being teacher-bashed, and pretty soon the state might take over our school. Does anybody look at what we contend with? Drugs, poverty, gang wars, grandmothers raising children, mothers in jail, fathers in jail, cursing, and disrespectful behavior.

Warrior teachers work at our schools! We stay because we love what we do. The proof is in our ability to show up every day with a smile and joy in our hearts.

RAMONA R. MUHAMMAD
Henderson, Nevada

WHERE ARE THE LIBRARIANS?

I JUST FINISHED reading my February issue of *NEA Today*. I have to say I was surprised and quite upset that nowhere was there any mention about the importance of consulting the school library/media specialist! You included nearly every other staff member. Yet, how is it that you ignored such a valuable resource in the schools?

Who better to coordinate reading programs with than the librarians?

COLLEEN CAULFIELD
Livingston, New Jersey

GLOBAL LITERACY

I LOVED YOUR ARTICLE, "Going Global" by John O'Neil (February). Illiteracy is one of our biggest problems. I say "our" because anything that affects our world affects everyone. When children and adults can't read, they are at the mercy of those in power.

What these retired teachers are doing is a wonderful example of what individuals can do to bring positive change to humanity. Whenever we take the time to help someone, for any reason, we make a difference. Every small act that enables someone to become more educated and confident does a great service to our world.

DONNA PITINO
Watertown, Connecticut

This obsession with test-driven instruction is insulting to the intelligence of modern-day students and teachers. —CHRISTIAN MILORD

FOR THE LOVE OF CHILDREN

PLEASE PASS KUDOS ALONG to Mr. Gundersen for his Last Bell piece in your February issue. What a great personal essay. What a lift for even a 34-year veteran like me. What truth! I wish it could be reprinted in every newspaper in America.

DEANNA CAREY
Johnson City, Tennessee

I WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK for legions of my colleagues when I nominate Arnold Gundersen's insights for the "Warm-Fuzzy Award." Frankly, I cannot recall the last time a piece made me feel as validated. In these times of shrinking resources; increased demands; and the plethora of federal, state, and local "attacks," the wisdom gained by a corporate retread earned a place of honor above my desk.

KEN LOOMIS
Covington, Washington

RATEMYTEACHERS.COM

AFTER READING "ARE YOU 'THE Worst Teacher Eva'?" (Rights Watch, February), I visited the RateMyTeachers.com Web site and found two problems: 1) The ratings are carried for years and not purged, resulting in possible erroneous averages, and 2) There are errors about the school sites with respect to teacher names and departments, which produces a misleading view of the school's "rating."

I also found myself wondering how many comments are left by the same student, creating a biased, lopsided rating. I would like to see all teachers go to the listing for their school, click on the teachers with frowny faces, and provide a rating of all 5's (the highest) in all categories. Perhaps then each teacher will get the rating they deserve for choosing this profession!

CHERYL LYMAN
Horsham, Pennsylvania

I WENT TO RateMyTeachers.com and the two ratings left about me were not very positive, but the students were also not able to correctly identify the subject matter that I teach.

I am held accountable every day for the education of the students in my classroom. At the end of each school year I give my students an evaluation sheet and ask them to critique our class and what I should change. This is much more beneficial to me than a Web site that allows students to slander a teacher without any recourse and lets the creators make a profit at that person's expense.

SUE ELLEN BELINSKI
Wedgefield, South Carolina

DISCIPLINE WOES

I THOROUGHLY ENJOYED your insightful and supportive article about class discipline ("Discipline Zingers," January). Time and trouble have taught me how to run an effective parent-teacher conference. When you make an appointment to meet with a parent at school, *make sure the child is present.* "Shop" for an administrator to to sit in on your conference, then make your pitch. "This is the way I need John or Jane to behave in order for him/her to learn." This kind of talk is specific and no one can object. I take notes and mail Mom a letter summarizing our four-way meeting and thank her for her help. As soon as John shows a bit of cooperation, I prepare an open note for him to take home.

JUDITH A. ISAACS
Marlton, New Jersey

MS. SWING

After reading your articles about jazz, ("Mr. Swing" and "All That Jazz," November), I was moved to write about the lack of awareness regarding women and jazz. Unfortunately, many female jazz musicians are fighting for acceptance in the jazz community. But educators can help spread the message that jazz is not just for guys.

We can request that: universities and associations award jazz scholarships to equal numbers of male and female applicants; jazz magazines, colleges, and organizations use more pictures of women in their brochures, recruitment ads, festivals, and posters; university jazz programs actively recruit women of all ages; and local musician unions take a more active roll in dealing with these issues. Help teach our students that jazz is a wonderfully creative art form for all!

CAROL STEFFENS
Salt Lake City, Utah

LET'S TALK

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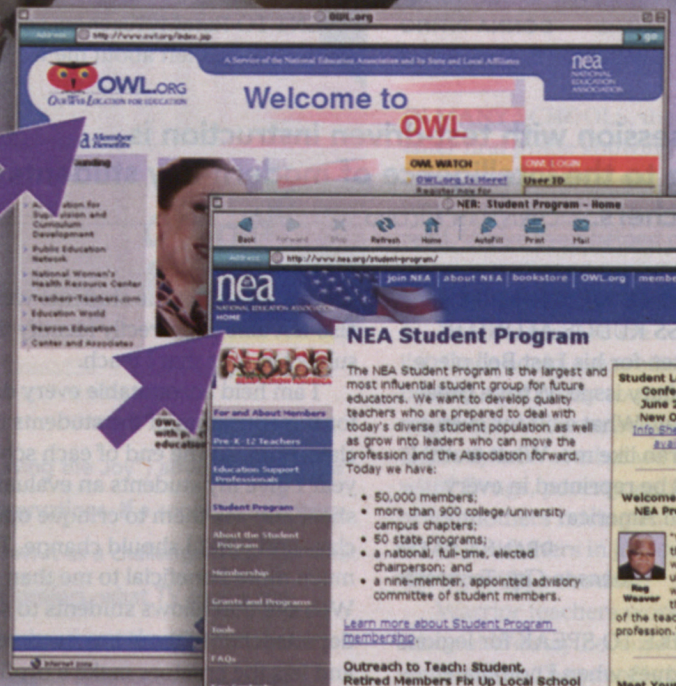
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Great Public Schools for Every Child

Broken Promises

After two years, it's more clear than ever that 'No Child Left Behind'—without adequate funding—spells disaster for schools.

January brought the two-year anniversary of the revised Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)—dubbed "No Child Left Behind." But millions of teachers and education support professionals were in no mood for confetti and noisemakers.

NEA President Reg Weaver spent much of January hearing about—and commenting on—the damaging effects of ESEA, which has created a new layer of testing bureaucracy and resulted in thousands of schools being negatively labeled.

In Birmingham, Alabama, Weaver visited four Jefferson County schools. Educators there told a familiar story: ESEA has created new mandates for testing, accountability, and teacher quality, while local schools are struggling with increased budget shortfalls.

Afterward, noting that large numbers of Alabama teachers and support professionals may be laid off this spring, Weaver told reporters covering his visit that Alabama and other states are being hit with new ESEA mandates even as they're being socked by budget deficits. While emphasizing that NEA supports the goal of raising achievement for all children, Weaver said the federal government hasn't provided the support for school systems to successfully implement the new law.

"The problem with the so-called No Child Left Behind law is that it's difficult if not impossible to implement," Weaver said in the evening news broadcast on WVTM-13, Birmingham's NBC affiliate.

Returning home from Alabama, Weaver fired off an op-ed in response to a *USA Today* editorial that criticized NEA's stance on ESEA. "Voters worry about the law's one-size-fits-all testing requirements and the resulting bureaucracy and paperwork, which this law dumps on states and schools to historical highs," Weaver penned. "What it doesn't provide are funds for what will truly make a difference: small class sizes, quality teachers and support professionals, and up-to-date books and materials."

One day after his op-ed was published, Weaver kicked off a news briefing at NEA headquarters to release additional evidence of the public's backing for a stronger, more substantial federal role in supporting public school systems and schools.

In a bipartisan poll commissioned by NEA, two-thirds of voters said the federal government should be spending more on the nation's schools. The same poll, a survey of 1,005 registered voters, found that 81 percent said schools should be given more time to meet new ESEA standards if the federal government fails to provide the funds promised in the law.

Another NEA study released at the briefing found that nearly 60 percent of the 8.5 million children eligible for Title I-A programs in FY 2003 went unserved, because lawmakers have not come up with the necessary funds. Overall, ESEA federal spending fell $32.6 billion short of what was required to reach every child.

With Weaver at the briefing were seventh-grade English teacher Linda Hodgson of Allentown, Pennsylvania, and Eastover, South Carolina, Principal Dorothy Ham. They gave reporters an earful about how ESEA has made things tougher—not better—for their students.

Above: **Reg Weaver** talks with members during a school visit in Jefferson County, Alabama. Top: Weaver announces new NEA research findings at a Washington, D.C., press conference. Nearly 60 percent of children eligible for Title I-A programs aren't being served, he noted.

A BIPARTISAN POLL commissioned by NEA found that 81 percent of Americans believe schools should be given more time to meet new ESEA standards if the federal government fails to provide schools with the funds promised in the law.

Hodgson said South Mountain Middle School, where she teaches, has carved 90 minutes a week out of the curriculum to practice for tests. "I no longer get the time I'd like to teach Twain and Shakespeare to students." Truancy and violence at the school also are on the rise, Hodgson said, because of an influx of students being transferred in based on yet another provision of ESEA.

Allentown is a tough place to work, but Hodgson said, "It's where I'm needed the most, so it's where I'll stay."

Hodgson and other educators deserve greater support, however. Educators "need the flexibility and the resources to ensure that No Child Left Behind is more than empty rhetoric," Weaver said.

—JOHN O'NEIL

PHOTO TOP: SANDY SCHAEFFER; PHOTO BELOW: DEAN ARGO

upfront

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Budget Brouhaha

When it comes to education funding, who's leaving whom behind? A new study by NEA reveals that the federal government last year shortchanged the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the so-called No Child Left Behind law, by more than $32 billion, based on what it would cost to serve every eligible child. The result: roughly 5 million disadvantaged children were deprived of individualized instruction and smaller classes. Meanwhile, shortfalls for Head Start left nearly 3 million eligible preschoolers without critical education, health, and social services.

Sadly, this year isn't looking any better. In January, Congress finally approved an education spending plan for the 2004 fiscal year—nearly four months behind schedule. And it wasn't even worth the wait. For starters, the budget stiffs ESEA for the third consecutive year, providing $7 billion less than what the law originally prescribed. That means states, once again, must pick up the slack to pay for the federal mandates.

"States and school districts, many strapped by severe budget crises, are working hard to make it possible for every child to be successful," says NEA President Reg Weaver. "But the gap is growing between what the federal government is providing and what is needed to get the job done."

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) also takes a hit, receiving about half of the amount of money Congress outlined in its original budget blueprint. The budget also shorts funding for English-language learners, which means nearly 4 million children won't get to learn English.

Can anything be done? You betcha. At press time, President Bush was scheduled to put his 2005 budget on the table, and if he gets his way he'll leave at least another 5 million children behind. Find out the latest details—and how you can speak out on behalf of your kids and schools—by visiting www.nea.org/lac/.

Voucher Mania

IT'S OFFICIAL. The federal government is now in the business of funding local voucher programs. Congress recently forked over $14 million to launch a five-year plan to give at least 1,700 Washington, D.C., schoolchildren the opportunity to attend private school. Unlike voucher programs in other states, the U.S. Department of Education will administer this one.

Your tax dollars at work.

ILLUSTRATION TOP: JASON REED; BOTTOM: SUSAN LEVAN

Four Ways To Kiss Your Stress Goodbye

Spring is just a few blooms away—which means, sad to say, it's time to buckle down for another round of testing. State-mandated standardized tests, advanced placement exams, SATs, ACTs, and end-of-course exams—it's enough to test *anyone's* sanity. But don't crash and burn just yet. Try a few of these tips to calm your mind as you help your students relax.

1. **BREATHE IN, BREATHE OUT.** **Good ol' deep breathing will help you chill and will reduce anxiety, panic attacks, depression, muscle tension, headaches, and fatigue. But don't cheat. Slowly count to five for each breath, in and out, to get the greatest benefits.**
2. **SCREAM (IF YOU DARE).** **Just close your classroom door first. Turns out that "venting" or talking about your feelings removes negative emotions from your body and allows you to refocus your energy.**
3. **HAVE A BELLY LAUGH.** **A knee-slapping hee-haw can reduce the level of stress hormones in your system and increase production of mood-elevating endorphins. So, start trolling for good jokes now so you can share them with your colleagues later.**
4. **SAY "OM."** **Or whatever. Relaxation techniques, like yoga and meditation, can break through physical tension, unblock your thoughts, and reduce anxiety. (Oh yes, a well-deserved Caribbean vacation produces the same effect.)**

$52 million

The amount of money TEXAS SCHOOLS LOSE each year to property tax abatements.

And 30 Years Later...

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DECADE (OR THREE) MAKES. It had been that long since Alaska State Representative Beth Kerttula spent an entire day in a public school classroom. But last fall, she and 40 other state legislators packed a lunch, grabbed their book bags, and headed back to school for a daylong event sponsored by NEA-Alaska.

Most legislators visited schools in their home districts, where they not only observed, but also learned the job duties of teachers and education support professionals. They even "helped" out with lessons.

"We hope lawmakers' experiences will better prepare them for the important policy and budget decisions they'll face," says NEA-Alaska President Rich Kronberg. "One of the main differences teachers have to deal with nowadays is "No Child Left Behind." We want legislators to see what impact that's having."

NEA member **Jean Thornley** introduces Alaska Senator **Hollis French** to her second-grade class.

ILLUSTRATION TOP: RUSSELL THURSTON; PHOTO BOTTOM: VIRGINIA MCKINNEY

Notepad

On Our Side

Nearly 75 percent of voters believe the public schools are improving or already are in good shape, according to a bipartisan opinion poll commissioned by NEA. And that's despite a lack of funding and unfair demands—in the public's opinion. Almost two-thirds of voters say the federal government should spend more on education, according to the poll. A majority of voters also favor NEA's proposed changes to the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including evaluating schools by multiple measures and not labeling a school "failing" when only one group of students doesn't do well on a test. In fact, 67 percent of voters say the law is unfair.

Bush and ESPs: Round 2

Education support professionals in at least 23 states took a hit back in 2001 when the Bush administration scrapped labor-backed OSHA ergonomics standards. The standards were especially relevant for bus drivers and secretaries with repetitive strain injuries and paraeducators who move disabled students.

Now, in 2004, that same administration is again compromising the interests of ESPs in areas such as privatization, asbestos exposure, and overtime pay. With Election Day just around the corner, it may be time to start researching the presidential candidates. For more, go to page 40.

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The Competitive Edge

WHEN IT COMES TO BARGAINING a top-notch contract, New Jersey's Evesham Township Education Association (ETEA) knows the right formula. The local's philosophy is simple: Don't even try to attract quality teachers and ESPs if your salaries aren't competitive with the market. And the school district agrees with them.

The new three-year contract includes an average 6 percent raise in teacher pay and a 5 percent increase for ESPs each year of the agreement. Those raises will take the beginning teacher salary from $34,500 to $41,000 and the top of the teacher pay scale from $64,500 to $71,000 during the 2005–06 school year. Neighboring school districts already pay their starting teachers $40,000 or more, says UniServ Field Representative Steve Swetsky, so the local used that information to make a case for higher wages.

> You have to have a relationship above and beyond what you do in bargaining...

But, ETEA didn't stop there. The local also secured full family health insurance coverage for first- and second-year employees, who used to qualify only for individual coverage. The contract also includes an extra personal day for ESPs. ETEA President Bill Parker and members of the local met monthly with school system administrators before bargaining even started to educate the district about the local's needs. Building that relationship paid dividends when the two sides began negotiating, Parker says.

"You have to have a relationship above and beyond what you do in bargaining," says Parker, a music teacher at Marlton Middle School. "You need to be able to talk to them."

Should We Worry or LOL?

If you're still trying to figure out that "LOL" stands for "laugh out loud," chances are you aren't up on the lingo of electronic text-messaging, the latest teen (and, well, adult) communication trend.

As more and more teens keep in touch by typed messages rather than phone conversations, they employ hundreds of common abbreviations and acronyms to say more with fewer keystrokes on their computer keyboards and cell phone keypads. According to *eSchool News*, this trend alarms some teachers and linguists.

American University linguistics professor Naomi Baron says text messaging is worrisome because "so much of American society has become sloppy or laissez faire about the mechanics of writing."

Meanwhile, teachers worry that this electro-speak will find its way into term papers and permanent vocabularies.

Alex Bergs, a visiting linguistics professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, thinks it won't. Teenagers tend to use the specialized language only for a while, he says, then revert to more conventional prose SOL ("sooner or later").

Carolyn Adger of Washington, D.C.'s, Center for Applied Linguistics even sees a positive side to the trend.

"I think all of this stuff is really wonderful, because it's expanding the writing skills of people," says Adger. "Innovating with language isn't dangerous."

So is text-messaging harmless? U decide.

ILLUSTRATION TOP: BARTON STABLER; BOTTOM: PHOTODISC

Making the Grade

So, are Montana's students really smarter than Wyoming's? If you compare their state test scores, you might think so. But, a study by the Oregon-based Northwest Evaluation Association, a nonprofit assessment group, found the test scores deceiving. Students in the two states could have the same skill levels, but show different test results.

HOW SO? It's another inconsistency raised by the test-focused Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The act gives states the opportunity to set passing scores or "proficiency" levels for their own state tests—but what's really being measured? That's anybody's guess. In Montana, for example, an eighth grader is considered "proficient" in math if she scores in the 36th percentile on the test. Across the state line, the same student would have to score in the 89th percentile to pass.

But the discrepancies don't end there. Sometimes, the proficiency levels vary between grades or subjects within a single state. In Arizona, for instance, a third grader can pass the state math test by scoring in the 46th percentile, while an eighth grader needs to score in the 75th. In Washington, fourth graders need to reach the 76th percentile on their math tests, but only the 53rd percentile on the state reading exam.

The nutty result: school districts saddled with ESEA's requirements to measure student progress only with tests can't accurately judge students' abilities in different subjects. And if they can't do that, the report notes, how can they determine funding and services needed for struggling students?

> The **NUMBER OF YEARS** Ohio has had a collective bargaining law.

See Ya After School

You probably had figured it out yourself, but now comes research that confirms it: After-school and summer programs *do* boost student achievement in math and reading—in some cases, significantly.

That's according to a new analysis by Colorado-based McREL Research. McREL evaluated 56 studies conducted since 1984 on the impact of out-of-school programs. Researchers found that overall these programs account for a four-point increase in elementary and secondary school test scores.

The programs are most effective with low-achieving and at-risk students, boosting reading scores among kindergarten, first-, and second-grade students by 10 points and among high school students by 17 points. One-on-one reading tutoring programs are the most effective, according to the report, and can increase student test scores by 19 points.

Sounds like a good reason to stay after class.

ILLUSTRATIONS TOP: JENNIFER THERMES AND ANDREW RAE; BOTTOM: PHOTODISC

Clipboard

Teen Births Tumbling

The teen birth rate reached a historic low in 2002, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A CDC report shows that births among girls ages 15–19 years decreased by 30 percent during the past decade to 43 births per 1,000 women. And the birth rate decreased even more among young teens (between 15 and 17 years)—down more than 40 percent since 1991. Meanwhile, the rate among girls between 10 and 14 years has been cut in half.

Coming to America

The rights of foreign teachers working in U.S. public schools may be getting overlooked, according to the NEA report *Trends in Foreign Teacher Recruitment*. Temporary teachers arriving from overseas generally do not receive the same protections and due-process rights afforded to stateside educators, the report found. What's more, some school districts shortchange their foreign teachers by paying them starting teachers' salaries regardless of their experience level and qualifications. Although visa programs require that nonimmigrant workers receive wages equal to or greater than those earned by similar employees, the mandate isn't strictly enforced, according to NEA's report. Nearly 10,000 foreign educators work in American schools under nonimmigrant and cultural exchange visas.

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Get Those Girls in School

What single strategy for developing countries will boost economic growth, improve health, and reduce child exploitation? Educating girls, says UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, in its annual *State of the World's Children* report.

More than 120 million children of primary school age are not in class, and most of them—65 million—are girls, says UNICEF. When girls go to school, everyone benefits because educated girls can better avoid exploitation and build healthy families, according to the report.

And it's in America's self-interest to promote girls' education worldwide, says Jill Christianson of NEA International Relations, because well-educated girls make the world a safer place for all of us.

"Education provides economic opportunities and lessens the desperation that leads to terrorism," says Christianson. "And the education of girls is the key element for economic development."

Although the ratio of girls to boys in school has improved dramatically, it will take a lot more work to get all primary-age children in school. So Education International, the global federation of educators' unions of which NEA is a member, is organizing Global Action Week for Education, April 19–25, to promote reaching this international goal by 2015. Educators can support the effort with activities and lesson plans available at www.campaignforeducation.org.

[Nearly 2 percent of GEORGIA EDUCATORS EARNED $85,000 or more last school year.

Time To Pay Up

Teachers, students, and school administrators usually take the fall when their schools don't meet state and federal standards. Now school board members in Louisiana may be put to the accountability test: A new state legislative proposal would suspend their pay if their parishes fail to bring struggling schools up to newly set standards.

John Crose, a former school board member for St. John the Baptist Parish who proposed the measure, thinks school board members in that state have gotten off too long without consequences. Time to hit them where it hurts, he says.

"Why should school board members not be accountable too?" Crose asked in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*. "The accountability system is looking hard at everybody—the children, the parents, the teachers. Let's put the school board members in that category."

If the measure passes the state legislature, board members stand to lose up to $800 a month. How's that for accountability?

ILLUSTRATION TOP: SUSAN LEVAN; BOTTOM: GARRIAN MANNING

Calling All Teachers

CASSANDRA MONTGOMERY'S 12TH-GRADE TEACHER wasn't just any ol' teacher to her—she was the person who inspired her to become an educator. As an African American, Montgomery considers that a gift. When she graduates from Alabama State University in May, she hopes she'll influence students of color in the same way.

Montgomery, a special education major, knows the need is there—just 21 percent of Alabama's teachers are African American or Hispanic. The Student Alabama Education Association (SAEA) knows it too, and hopes to boost those numbers with the help of a $5,000 NEA minority recruitment grant.

The SAEA will target minority students at Alabama State University and encourage them to pursue teaching and join the Association. A key piece of this effort will be workshops on test anxiety to help students prepare for the Praxis test.

Montgomery, the central regional coordinator for SAEA, says the workshops could help more students overcome their testing fears.

"Many students get so worked up about this test that they forget they actually do know the information and probably will do well," she says.

She hopes these workshops and recruitment strategies will convince more minorities to enter teaching. If students see more minorities in education, it might encourage them to follow in their favorite teacher's footsteps, just like Montgomery did.

—URMILA SUBRAMANYAM

Cassandra Montgomery

[NOBODY EVER TOLD ME]

No Way Out

My first teaching experience was in a self-contained, special education classroom. My six students had a variety of physical, mental, and emotional disabilities. I felt that I had a very tenuous grasp on the classroom, and that some days I had no control over the students.

And then it happened.

One day, one of the students went to the door and it would not open. So I called through the door until another teacher came by and told her about our predicament. After some probing, we decided the door needed to come off the hinges—a task for a district maintenance worker located on the other side of the county. I was told it would be about two hours before we could get out.

I turned to my students and explained the situation. Then I thought about my options. I could give in to panic at being locked in a room with students with unpredictable behavior, which would result in bedlam, or I could carry on as usual and calmly continue with the lessons. I chose the lessons.

Two hours later, the door came off and the crowd outside witnessed our class deep at work.

From that experience, I learned that students take their cue from how the teacher behaves. I now teach second grade and I still try to remain low key in stressful situations.

And I never close my classroom door.

—TERESA RICHARDSON
Second-grade teacher
Elon, North Carolina

First 5 Years

Two-Minute Tips

Noise Thermometer

To monitor my students' noise level, I created a "noise thermometer." The tool looks like a three-foot thermometer with red Velcro as the mercury. The number increments range from zero (no noise) to 10 (extreme noise). The thermometer starts at zero each morning and when my class gets loud I raise the Velcro to a level that matches the noise level. As soon as I move near the thermometer, my students quiet down. If the thermometer hits five the class loses two minutes of recess time. The system lets students monitor themselves and work cooperatively to control noise.

—SUSAN REICH
Rangely, Colorado

Participation Points

I use a seating chart with grids to track student participation during class. After marking attendance on the chart, I pass the sheet to a reliable student, who notes whenever a classmate answers a question. The system allows me to engage in oral activities and encourage students to participate. After each class, I review the sheet for accuracy and determine who needs to participate more. It also helps me call on all of my students.

—ANN RADER
Fulton, Maryland

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PHOTO TOP: CARMEN SISSON; ILLUSTRATION BOTTOM: SUSAN FARRINGTON

Reaching Out to the Far East

The most widely spoken language worldwide isn't English, or French or Spanish for that matter. It's Mandarin Chinese, and more than 1.3 billion people in China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and elsewhere speak it. But it probably isn't spoken in your school. While the majority of students in China (which means millions) study English, fewer than 50,000 American students study Chinese.

But the People's Republic of China and the College Board hope to change that by creating an Advanced Placement (AP) course and test on the Chinese language and culture. The Chinese government will pick up about half of the $1.37 million it will cost to develop the program, which is one of four new College Board initiatives in world languages (Italian, Japanese, and Russian round out the list).

Like other AP courses, the Chinese program, available in fall 2006, will let high school students pursue a college-level course and potentially earn college credit if they can master the language's 6,000 written characters and four speaking tones. Moreover, the College Board will offer professional development activities in the summers of 2005 and 2006 and during the 2006–07 school year for educators who plan to teach the course.

Although the language can be difficult to master, these efforts will pay off in the future as China plays a larger role in international markets. Already, U.S. foreign trade with Asia has surpassed that with Europe and now exceeds $800 billion a year.

47.9m

The number of **STUDENTS PROJECTED TO ENROLL** in public schools in 2005

Wrap it up. I'll take it.

What does a school district do with an old building that no one wants to buy? It sells it on eBay of course. Kidding? Nope. Tucked among the Star Wars collectibles and celebrity memorabilia, eBay shoppers can find a handful of school buildings for sale. For instance, for a mere $45,000 you can own Paradise Grade School—a charming one-story brick building on 1.3 acres of land in Paradise, Kansas. Or if you're looking for more space, and have an extra $189,000 lying around, check out the two-story, 40,000-square-foot school available in Klemme, Iowa. The school comes complete with a large parking lot and 7 acres of land. Sounds like a bargain. But get your offers in quickly. These deals won't last forever.

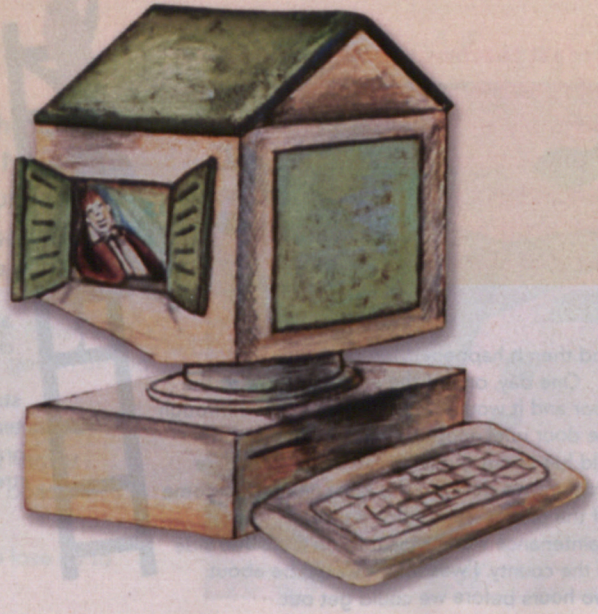

ILLUSTRATION TOP: NATALIE RACIOPPA AND JENNIFER THERMES; BOTTOM: ALBERTO RUGGIERI

TV? Thanks, But No Thanks

Despite what they say, children *can* live without television. And students at Tuscan Elementary School in Maplewood, New Jersey, are living proof.

MORE THAN 50 PERCENT of students at the school have agreed to turn off their televisions, videos, and electronic games Sunday night through Friday morning for the entire school year. It's all part of the school's Ultimate TV-Turnoff Challenge, a project Janie Van Oss, the school's librarian, started two years ago.

IN PAST YEARS, students had participated in the acclaimed National TV-Turnoff Week at the end of April, but locally the results were inconsistent, says Van Oss. The week often coincided with Spring Break, making it difficult to get students involved. So in October 2001, Van Oss coordinated her own weeklong, no-TV event, and it was such a success that she encouraged students to push through, TV-free, for the rest of the school year. That year, 44 students stuck with the project. Last year, the number jumped to 144 students, and this year 312 students are onboard.

STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATE get to check out one extra library book every week, which has meant good things for students' tests scores. An independent research firm found that students involved in the project had higher scores on the school district's reading, language, and math achievement tests than students who did not participate.

SOUND LIKE A GOOD IDEA? Then join the 10th annual National TV-Turnoff Week, April 19–25. Visit www.tvturnoff.org for more information.

—URMILA SUBRAMANYAM

Dream OR Nightmare

REMEMBER YOUR PROM NIGHT?

TELL US ABOUT IT in 50 words or less and get a chance to win an NEA book bag chock full of goodies! Send us a copy of your best photo from that memorable night OR tell us how you cope with the hubbub around the prom at your current school. We'll select the most interesting photos and stories and run them in an upcoming issue. Send your package, with name and contact numbers, to Sabrina Holcomb, *NEA Today,* 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036 or e-mail sholcomb@nea.org. Your entry must reach us by March 10 to be considered.

Smile

While studying genetics, I had my seventh-grade students view a film about cloning.

About 10 minutes into the viewing, the focus of the movie turned to "Dolly the Sheep"—the famous clone. After several mentions of "Dolly the Sheep," one of my students turned toward me and, with a confused look on his face, asked innocently, "So, who is Dolly the Llama?" I thought I had misunderstood the question and asked him to repeat himself, and he asked the question again.

After several minutes of laughter on my part, I asked him if he meant who is His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibet.

—PETRA DAVIS
Tustin, California

During a lesson on feelings, my kindergarten students were sharing their fears. One little boy eagerly raised his hand and shared that he wasn't scared of hot tubs because he could reach. But he quickly added that he was very scared of big pools.

"Oh, because you can't reach," I said.

He looked at me inquisitively and said, "Well, I can reach the bottom. I just can't reach the top."

—KAREN FISHER-ALANIZ
Walla Walla, Washington

Have a funny school story, anecdote, or vignette you'd like to share?

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ILLUSTRATION TOP: MCMILLAN AND PHOTODISC; ILLUSTRATIONS BOTTOM: PAUL GILLIGAN

Taxing Times for State Governments

As the economy grows, state deficits persist. NEA suggests ways to tap more revenues from those who can most afford to pay.

In 1996, a Delaware-based business reporter discovered more than 700 company headquarters miraculously squeezed into five floors of a "slender" office tower in Wilmington. Some 500 claimed the 13th floor alone.

What kind of magic was this, the inquiring sleuth wanted to know. "Frankly," the building manager snapped, "it's none of your business."

Well, frankly, the identities of those so-called "passive investment companies" (PICs) in the building are the business of every taxpaying school employee. PICs, the subsidiaries of prominent corporations, help their corporate offices evade the very state business taxes that help fund public education.

How? Each PIC "charges" its corporate parent a "royalty" for the use of its own trademark or patent, and that fee becomes a tax-deductible expense for the corporation.

How dare they, you ask, when your school board is pleading poverty and class sizes are increasing? Welcome to the hot topic of tax reform—business loopholes.

According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics, corporate income taxes provided 10.2 percent of revenue in the states levying them in 1979, but just 6.3 percent in 2000. That's

JUST BECAUSE THE ECONOMY is finally improving doesn't mean basic tax structures are. State revenue lags by at least 18 months after a recession ends.

—MICHAEL KAHN, NEA RESEARCH

because corporations are getting more sophisticated and aggressive in exploiting legal loopholes such as PICs, says Michael Mazerov, a tax system analyst for the nonpartisan Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (www.cbpp.org).

Mazerov, who has studied the most common state loopholes points out that such loopholes are easy to close and "can generate income fairly quickly."

That's income sorely needed by states still facing huge budget deficits. "Just because the economy is finally improving doesn't mean basic tax structures are," points out Michael Kahn, an NEA Research Department manager. "State revenue lags by at least 18 months after a recession ends, even as the economy grows."

States can't expect to tap much more revenue from average taxpayers. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the nation's median income actually declined by $500 in the last economic quarter of 2003.

But America's super-rich and its corporations are, yes, getting richer and can chip in more during these tough times, says Kahn. To that end, NEA Research recommends that NEA state affiliates lobby to close corporate tax loopholes, pass a temporary income tax surcharge on the wealthiest 2 percent of taxpayers, and "decouple" state tax codes from the federal estate tax formula—which drains state coffers.

These are pages right from the playbook of the New Jersey Education Association. NJEA helped Governor Jim McGreevey pass the Business Tax Reform Act of 2002, which closed the three most common loopholes studied by Michael Mazerov (including PICs) and yielded an immediate payoff. Corporate tax revenues, which had shrunk to $1.17 billion in Fiscal Year 2002, shot up to $2.5 billion in FY 2003.

The bottom line: At a time when many other states are slashing education funding, deficit-battered New Jersey can at least afford "level state aid to schools, the same as in previous years," says NJEA staffer Ed Richardson. "However, there have been some layoffs—although nothing widespread—and multiple years of state-mandated district spending caps are taking their toll, so we're not out of the woods yet."

Not by a long shot. That's why NJEA, through the broad-based Fairness Alliance coalition, campaigned hard last year for a temporary, incremental personal income tax increase on

No, this tax haven isn't Bermuda or the Cayman Islands. It's Wilmington, Delaware, where many firms set up shop to evade levies that fund schools.

New Jersey's top 2 percent of earners—dubbed the "Millionaire's Tax" by the press—to raise another $1 billion and restore the worst of the state's budget cuts. State lawmakers said "no, thank you" to that one, but this year they're facing another huge deficit and running out of quick fiscal fixes.

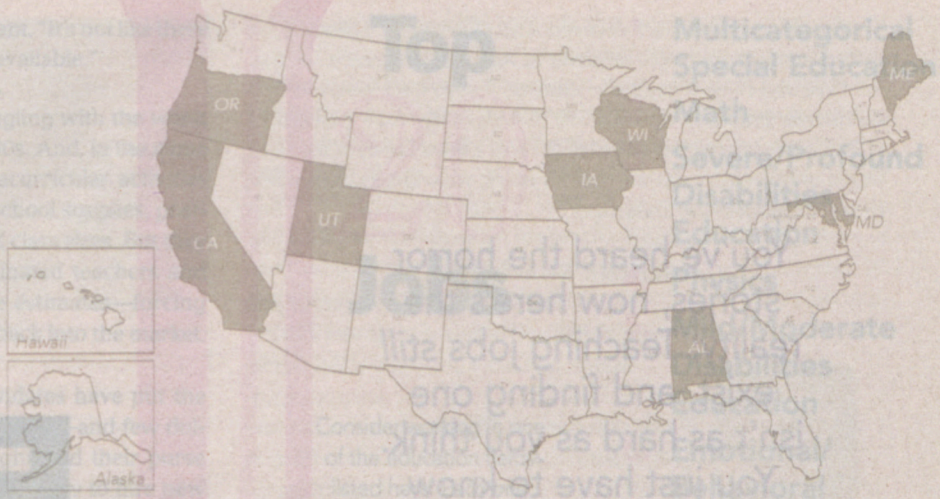
"We're working to reinvigorate our coalition and update our plan for the upcoming budget debate," says Richardson. The new proposal may be somewhat different, he says, but it will rely "on the same principles of 'recapturing the windfall' from the wealthiest New Jerseyans, who reaped the greatest tax cuts in the boom years."

NEA's Kahn says activism like that is critical. "If current trends in tax policy continue," he notes, "we won't be able to maintain the quality of life that we are used to as Americans, let alone create great public schools for all children."

—DAVE WINANS

FOR MORE on tax issues, go to www.cbpp.org.

PHOTO: MIKE BIGGS



Alabama

Instead of insisting that out-of-state corporations pay their fair share of taxes, the Business Council of Alabama (BCA) recommended to lawmakers that school employees and retirees pay the cost of the financial crisis facing schools—through cuts in health benefits and alterations in the retirement system. The **Alabama Education Association (AEA)** called on its members to "fight back" through mass lobbying.

"The unfair burden that the BCA wants to put on your back is based on *greed* and fueled by the misguided belief that what's good for big business is good for all," AEA Executive Secretary Paul Hubbert told educators. "Over the years, tax loopholes have allowed the big boys to rob us blind and short-change the Education Trust Fund."

Maryland

As the state legislature met in February, **Maryland State Teachers Association (MSTA)** members rallied en masse with partners in the Coalition for Public School Funding against lawmakers' threat to dilute school aid in the next budget. "Our teachers, education support professionals, and other partners in education understand the grave ramifications of limited resources in our public schools," said MSTA President Patricia Foerster. "We don't want to see students cheated or compromised."

Iowa

In a show of unity, the state's leading education groups—the **Iowa State Education Association (ISEA),** the state PTA, and the organizations of school boards and administrators—launched a major grassroots organizing effort to convince Iowans that the school funding crisis is real and that it will affect education quality for years unless something is done soon.

At the heart of the campaign: informational meetings and forums across the state to create awareness of the problem and to mobilize citizens to lobby for a solution.

California

The **California Teachers Association (CTA)** led discussions with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to shape a state budget proposal that protects base funding for schools. The spending plan protects campuses from dangerous cuts this school year and increases education funding by $2 billion next year, including cost-of-living adjustments for all K–12 schools and community colleges.

CTA President Barbara Kerr thanked Schwarzenegger for working with teachers in difficult budgetary times. "The way he involved us in the process is a first and we appreciate that," said Kerr. "We will continue to work with the governor and legislature to implement this agreement."

Wisconsin

Governor Jim Doyle, who has consistently opposed expansion of the Milwaukee district voucher program, vetoed bills to extend the state's voucher program. Any changes to that program, he explained, "must be part of an overall package that improves education for everyone and addresses serious concerns that have been raised about accountability within that program."

"Governor Doyle recognizes that these bills would inflict severe damage on public education," said **Wisconsin Education Association Council** President Stan Johnson. "If true accountability is to exist, standards for voucher schools and public schools must be identical."

Utah

The **Utah Education Association (UEA)** filed a suit in federal district court charging that the state legislature, in amendments to the 2001 Voluntary Contributions Act (VCAI), is unconstitutionally infringing on UEA's rights of "protected speech and association."

The new law, VCAII, prohibits UEA and other public sector unions from using dues to communicate positions on political candidates to their members—or to communicate to the public about ballot initiatives and other issues of public importance. Incredibly, the law does not impose similar restrictions on private sector unions or businesses.

Maine

The **Maine Education Association (MEA)** is cooperating with the Maine state Department of Education in an anonymous survey of teachers' workloads. Survey data are needed to support a legislative study on the issue, and MEA has urged members to participate.

"The higher the participation by teachers, the more powerful the data will be," the MEA membership magazine urged readers. "The information is vital to demonstrate MEA's contention that educators are overburdened by mandates and in need of a greater voice in educational policy decisions."

Oregon

When the Dalles and Chenowith school districts merge this July, the **Oregon Education Association (OEA)** will gain 68 new ESP members in addition to the 100-plus members currently represented by the **Dalles Association of Education Support Professionals.**

The reason: In a recent representation election conducted for ESPs in the merged district, OEA beat a competing organization by more than two to one.

J IS FOR JOB

You've heard the horror stories, now here's the reality: Teaching jobs *still* exist, and finding one isn't as hard as you think. You just have to know where to look.

BY KRISTEN LOSCHERT

OK, what gives? For more than a decade, school districts, the media, and even your Association have told you there is a teacher shortage. But now all you hear about are teacher layoffs and school budget cuts.

So, where did all the jobs go?

That's a question Amy Simmons wishes she could answer. After she graduated from North Dakota's Minot State University in 2001, Simmons began substitute teaching because of the lack of full-time positions. A year later, her dream came true when she landed a job teaching third grade at a school in Minot.

Her dream job quickly turned into budget crunch reality, however, when she found herself without a permanent assignment the following spring. Facing a declining student population, Simmons' district consolidated three schools into one and reduced the staff, starting with the least experienced teachers, like Simmons.

"It's so frustrating when teaching kids is what you know you were meant to do," says Simmons, who substitute teaches and bartends to get by. "It's an absolute roller coaster of emotions. You never know what's going to happen. Is a job going to come along?"

While Simmons' case is extreme, it certainly isn't unique. However, the job market for teachers has hardly dried up. A demand still exists in most subject areas and in many parts of the country. But finding your *ideal* job—whether you're fresh out of school or midway through your career—requires some research and flexibility.

BUDGET CUT BLITZ

Understanding where the job market has been—and where it's going—is a good place to start. Despite what you've heard, the teacher shortage isn't just some urban legend. There really was one back in the 1990s. With a thriving economy—and a rallying stock market—many educators left the profession to snap up higher paying jobs in private industry. At the same time, school districts offered attractive retirement incentives, which encouraged many educators to cash in their mutual funds and leave the profession early. Consequently, by 2001, the "peak" for the shortage, most education fields desperately needed teachers, while others experienced what's called a "balanced demand"—meaning there was an equal number of job candidates and job openings.

That's the finding of the American Association for Employment in Education (AAEE), which annually evaluates the supply and demand for educators in 64 different administrative and teaching fields based on surveys of college career centers and teacher education programs.

During the last two years, however, the market has softened a bit, says B.J. Bryant, executive director of AAEE. While almost all education fields faced shortages just a few years ago, only 26 face them today, and seven have some surplus. But that doesn't mean there are plenty of new teachers to go around.

ILLUSTRATION: PETER BONO

"There's no huge new supply," says Bryant. "It's not like there is this bulge of teacher education students available."

It's simply the economic times, she says.

States and local communities are struggling with the worst budget shortfalls they've seen since the 1940s. And, in the name of penny pinching, schools have cut extracurricular activities and enrichment classes, purchased fewer school supplies, postponed maintenance projects, and increased class sizes. But they haven't stopped there. They've also terminated teachers and staff—more than 10,000 of them by some estimates—forcing record numbers of experienced educators back into the market. (And more layoffs could be in the future.)

On top of that, increasing federal mandates have put the squeeze on schools. With new demands to meet—and few dollars to meet them—many districts have tightened their purse strings. And that, says Bryant, has left little money to hire new teachers or fill existing vacancies. "If a school district had all the money it needed, we'd be right back to the shortages of 2001," she says.

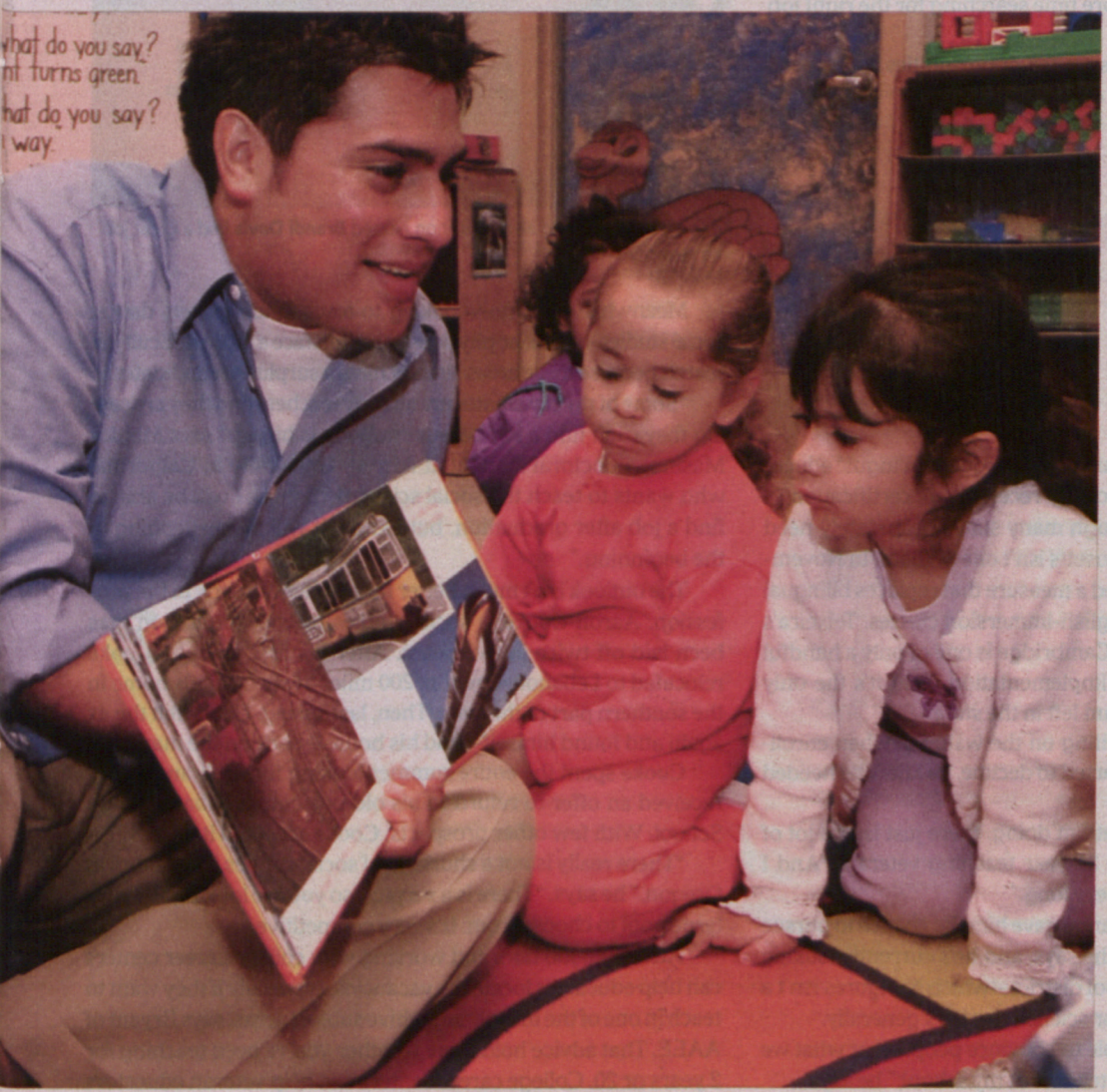
Financial pressures have forced many teachers to delay their retirements, as well, which means fewer positions have opened up for new grads and new job seekers.

Top 20 Jobs

Need a job?

Consider working in one of the education fields listed here. Each one has a shortage of educators.

1. Multicategorical Special Education
2. Math
3. Severe/Profound Disabilities Education
4. Physics
5. Mild/Moderate Disabilities Education
6. Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities Education
7. Chemistry
8. Bilingual Education
9. Mental Retardation Education
10. Learning Disability Education
11. Visually Impaired Education
12. Hearing Impaired Education
13. Spanish
14. Early Childhood Special Education
15. Biology
16. English as a Second Language
17. Earth/Physical Science
18. School Audiologist
19. Speech Pathologist
20. General Science



Rudy Jimenez Ortiz gains practical classroom experience as a teaching assistant at a California preschool.

CHART SOURCE: *2003 EDUCATOR SUPPLY AND DEMAND REPORT* FROM AAEE; PHOTO: BOB RIHA JR.

J IS FOR JOB

But, no one can teach forever. And states like California, for instance, still face a major turnover in staff within the next decade.

"We still have a need for teachers," says Gail Watts, of the California Teachers Association (CTA). "Fifty-four percent of CTA members are over 42 years old and a third are over 50. So in terms of retirements in the next 10 years, we will need to replace those teachers in the classroom."

WHERE THE JOBS ARE

But what if you need a job today or just want a change? Where should you look?

Major teacher shortages still exist in special education, math, the sciences, English as a Second Language, and some foreign languages like Spanish, according to AAEE. That's good news for student teachers like Amanda Macdonald, a sophomore chemistry major at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania.

"I'm probably not as worried about finding a job, but more finding a job that I will be happy with or finding a job in a state that I will be happy with, not having to settle," she says.

Fortunately, educators in shortage areas have that luxury, says Bryant. These teachers still need to complete a diligent job search, but they can spend more time searching for the right job in the right school for them.

High-demand subjects also offer opportunities for experienced educators looking for a career change.

If you are persistent, then you can find a job. You just have to keep working at it.

—BRANDI DAVIS

Take Jeff Teixeira, for instance, a Portuguese bilingual educator in Massachusetts who recently received his certification in middle school science. Although many states desperately need bilingual educators, Massachusetts isn't one of them. In November 2002, state voters approved a measure that replaces bilingual education programs with English-immersion classes. Teixeira's class at King Open School in Cambridge is one of only a handful that survived the new law's implementation. And it's the only non-Spanish bilingual program left in the state.

Teixeira could see the writing on the wall. So, when enrollments in his school district started to decline, he knew he needed a change.

"It's not that I dislike what I'm doing, there just isn't a lot of future in it," says Teixeira, a 21-year teaching veteran. "And I don't think it will be around very long."

On the bright side, the change gave him the chance to pursue a lifelong interest in science, he says, and he's currently looking for a new position in his school district—which he figures isn't a bad idea given the demand for science teachers generally.

"Who knows, I may be able to convince people that what we need is a Portuguese science teacher at my school," he says.

Keeping an open mind about location helped **Brandi Davis** find a great job in a new city.

Meanwhile, educators looking to teach kindergarten, dance, social studies, health, or physical education face a more difficult job search because these areas already have a surplus of candidates.

"Some of my classmates are already teachers and they are saying they can't find a job because nobody is hiring," says Monica Masino, a doctoral student at Argosy University in California, who wants to teach the social sciences. "I think I will be able to find a job after graduation, but I know it will be challenging in the beginning."

The outlook isn't much better for teachers already in the profession. Aaron Cooke, a social studies teacher in Oregon, has been laid off twice in two years. After his first job loss, Cooke relocated to Lebanon, Oregon, 200 miles away from his home in the southern part of the state. Then, last spring, Cooke felt the ax again and found himself—and his house—back on the market.

Cooke spent the entire summer looking for a job and finally received an offer to return to his old position at Lebanon High School. With few other prospects, Cooke accepted it.

"There really is not a shortage of social studies instructors in Oregon," he says. "There is a surplus, so you are looking at a very large pool to choose from. It's very competitive."

Attending job fairs and working with college career centers can help educators locate the vacancies, especially if they want to teach in one of the more competitive subject areas, says Bryant of AAEE. That advice holds true whether you've been teaching for 2 years or 20. College career centers can help veteran educators

ILLUSTRATION: JANINE CABOSSEL; PHOTO: MATT FERGUSON

learn the most current job-hunting techniques and update their résumés. Many also have agreements with universities nationwide and will connect you with local resources if you no longer live near your alma mater.

Educators can maximize their job opportunities by looking outside their region and state as well, because finding the perfect job often comes down to one thing: location, location, location.

Urban and rural areas still have a great need for educators, says Bryant. States in the South such as Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas also have some shortages, she adds.

Meanwhile, states in the Midwest and Northeast, which have a large number of teacher colleges and, consequently, plenty of new graduates, generally have an overabundance of teachers.

That's what worries Rena McCartney, a graduate student at Edinboro University in Pennsylvania.

"A lot of my friends who are out there now found themselves having to move extremely far away for the job opportunities," says McCartney, an aspiring elementary school teacher. "I'm concerned that if I don't find any jobs available within a few hours of home, I'm going to have to move out of state, which I would be willing to do if I had to, but it would not be my first choice."

McCartney's sentiments are not unusual. More than 75 percent of teacher education graduates take a job within 50 miles of their hometown or the college from which they graduated, according to Bill Loadman, associate dean for research at Ohio State University. And once they get those jobs, they tend to stay put. Only about 7 percent of teachers changed schools or school districts during the 2000–01 school year, according to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. If they do move, very few teachers go out of state. (Less than 30 percent of teachers have taught in two or more states, according to NEA's *Status of the American Public School Teacher 2000–2001* report.)

TAKING A LEAP: MOVING

But, if they live in a tight market, educators should keep an open mind about geography. That's a reality Brandi Davis knows all too well.

When the middle school teacher was laid off from her school in Elgin, Illinois, in April 2003, she tried to find a position in a

Job SEARCH Savvy

Start Early

If you wait until May to start your job search, chances are you still will be searching in August. Most school systems accept applications year-round, although December and January are especially good months to apply. Early birds beat the rush and get their names into a school system's database long before the competition, which means they'll get advance notice about spring job fairs.

Get Online

It's almost impossible to look for a job today without using the Internet. Many states have universal applications available online that allow job candidates to submit a single application electronically to every district in the state. You also can find job postings, certification requirements, salary information, and even job search advice on the Web. For links to some useful job sites, check out "Statistics for Survival" on page 26 and "Take Your Job Hunt to Cyberspace" on page 52.

Call Your Friends

Everyone knows that finding a job is sometimes more about who you know than what you know. So build a solid network of fellow educators who can give you the skinny about openings in their districts. Your state affiliate and UniServ office are good places to start to connect with other NEA members and Association resources. Don't forget to tap into your college career center, either, even if you've been in the profession for several years. The career counselors can provide job search guidance and even connect you with local contacts if you no longer live near your alma mater.

Track Everything

Keep tabs on your work experience. It will make it much easier to reconstruct your résumé later. Don't forget to highlight the types of classes you've taught (advanced placement, remedial, honors, special education), committees on which you've served, involvement in extracurricular activities or sports, awards, professional development activities (including National Board Certification), and community involvement.

Avoid Mistakes

Make sure your cover letter, résumé, and portfolio are flawless. Double check your spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Make sure your résumé has your current contact information. If you're still in school and include your college address and phone number on your résumé, include your post-graduation information as well. Don't forget about cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses either. You don't want to miss out on a job because the school district couldn't find you.

Be Professional

Make sure your answering machine or voicemail has a simple conservative message. A casual, boisterous, or off-the-wall greeting may be popular with your friends, but probably will turn off an employer—and cost you an interview. Return all calls promptly, even if you've accepted another position. If you have to leave a message, be courteous, clear, and concise and avoid using slang. The same goes for all written correspondence, including e-mail.

ILLUSTRATION: PAUL MANZ

J IS FOR JOB

In a tight job market, educators like **Amy Simmons** build their résumés by substitute teaching.

nearby district, but without much success. Once she expanded her search statewide—and attended a job fair at Northern Illinois University—Davis discovered more options. She ended up with several job offers, including one from Brookwood Middle School in Glenwood, Illinois, located about an hour and a half from Elgin, which she accepted.

Although the layoff was difficult, and her move unexpected, Davis enjoys her new position. Plus, it comes with some perks her previous position lacked: a smaller class size and the opportunity to pursue her master's degree on the district's dime.

"I always heard that teaching positions were the most stable positions in the world, but I've learned that is not always the case," says Davis, a sixth-grade science and language arts teacher. "But if you are persistent, then you can find a job. You just have to keep working at it."

You never know what's going to happen. Is a job going to come along?

—AMY SIMMONS

More often than not, though, educators relocate because of family or life changes; dissatisfaction with their current location, work environment, or salary; or simply a desire to see a new place.

Bara Franklin, an eighth-grade science teacher in Chesterfield County, Virginia, is a perfect example. Two years ago, Franklin moved from New Jersey to Virginia to be closer to her parents. She quickly realized, though, that her new school system didn't meet many of her personal needs. For starters, Franklin could not secure a permanent teaching certificate in Virginia, despite the 10 years of teaching experience, master's degree, and K–8 endorsement she brought with her from New Jersey. That combined with the low salary, her inability to move to the high school level, and a growing dissatisfaction with her working conditions told Franklin she needed a change. She currently is looking for a new teaching position in Illinois.

"I feel like there is a high demand for teachers in general. There seems to be a shortage everywhere," says Franklin. "Quality teachers who have experience, who are career teachers, are in demand. I hope just having that experience and qualifications behind me would be a good, attractive quality for any district."

But sometimes moving *isn't* an option and educators like Nela Foster know how difficult that can make the job search.

After graduating from the University of Central Oklahoma last May, Foster moved to Texas when her husband accepted a position in Fort Worth. Since then, she has worked as a substitute teacher because she has not found a full-time position in any of the surrounding school districts.

"It's disappointing and disheartening," says Foster, who wants to teach high school English. "But, I feel optimistic about the next school year. I'm substituting anywhere they will let me sub, and I'm substituting every day so I can get my foot in the door and make those contacts."

GETTING CONNECTED

In a competitive market, networking and building your contacts often mean the difference between kick-starting your career and settling for a paycheck.

Fortunately, NEA members can tap into Association resources to build those connections, which gives them an edge over other job candidates.

"You need to network with as many teachers as possible. It opens doors for you that way," says Rudy Jimenez Ortiz, president of the Student California Teachers Association (SCTA) and a preschool teaching assistant.

To encourage NEA Student members to network, SCTA holds its membership meetings in conjunction with those for Active teacher members. This way, student teachers can talk with current classroom educators about hiring trends and job openings in their districts, says Ortiz. Meanwhile, regional and national meetings such as NEA's annual Student Leadership Conference give future educators the chance to talk with experts, NEA staff, and other preservice educators about hiring trends nationwide.

"It's very important for us to go out and find out what's going on in the market," says Ortiz, a graduate of California State University San Marcos. "It varies around the state how the job market is going to be. There are still jobs out there, but now it means doing more homework."

PHOTO: BETH KEENEY; ILLUSTRATION: JAC DEPCZYK

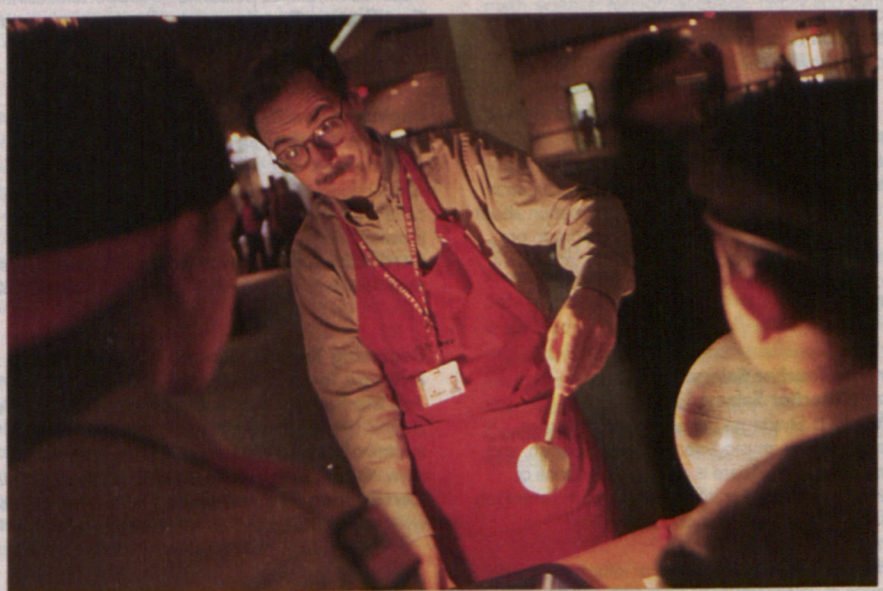
That's good advice for veteran educators too. And your Association can help you with your research. NEA state affiliates and UniServ offices can provide information about job openings, salaries and benefits, mentoring opportunities, and new teacher induction programs in local school districts. They also help members connect with one another and offer networking opportunities through state and regional conferences.

Educators need to take responsibility for their job search as well and do everything they can to make themselves more attractive to school districts, Ortiz adds. Although state budget cuts have reduced the number of formal internships available to preservice teachers, college students can gain practical experience as school volunteers or through classroom observations, Ortiz suggests. Ortiz, for instance, has worked with preschoolers at a San Diego child development center, and with school-age and middle school students to build his qualifications.

It's not that I dislike what I'm doing... I've just developed other interests and want to pursue them.

—JEFF TEIXEIRA

Veteran educators likewise should tap into their experiences outside the classroom when they market themselves to school districts. Teixeira in Massachusetts, for instance, volunteers at a science museum in Boston to build his subject knowledge as he transitions from bilingual education to science.



Jeff Teixeira prepares for his new career as a middle school science teacher by volunteering at a local science museum.

PHOTOS: JIM HARRISON

Experience on a regional or school committee, as a district mentor, or as a coach or extracurricular activity sponsor also will distinguish a teacher from other job applicants, says Bryant at AAEE.

Educators should attend professional development programs through their school districts and their Association as well to learn about the latest education research and new teaching strategies. That knowledge is sure to set them apart from the competition.

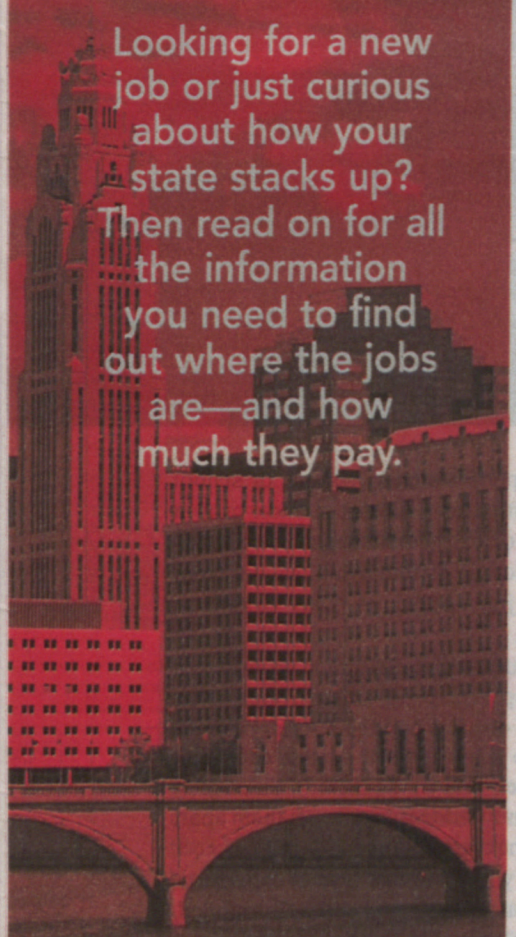
"If you bring that type of experience and you are informed and well-rounded, you will be able to choose where you want to work because so many districts are going to want those qualifications," says Ortiz. "You can't let budget cuts stop you. If this is what you truly want to do, you'll find a way." nea

J IS FOR JOB

Statistics for Survival:

State by State

Looking for a new job or just curious about how your state stacks up? Then read on for all the information you need to find out where the jobs are—and how much they pay.



Alabama

Beginning Teacher Salary: $29,938
Average Teacher Salary: $37,194
Job Market: Teacher shortages, especially in special education, math, and science. For information about current job openings, visit www.alsde.edu/html/JobVacancies.asp?footer=general.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.alsde.edu, or call the Alabama Department of Education at 334-242-9977.

Alaska

Beginning Teacher Salary: $36,294
Average Teacher Salary: $49,418
Job Market: Teacher shortages in all areas, especially special education, math, and science. For information about current job openings, visit www.alaska.edu/atp/.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.eed.state.ak.us/TeacherCertification/ or call 907-465-2831.

Arizona

Beginning Teacher Salary: $27,648
Average Teacher Salary: $39,973
Job Market: Shortages of special education, math, bilingual, science, and ESL teachers. There also is a need for more minority teachers. For information about current job openings, visit www.arizonaeducationjobs.com.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.ade.state.az.us/certification/ or call 602-542-4361.

Arkansas

Beginning Teacher Salary: $27,565
Average Teacher Salary: $36,962*
Job Market: Teacher shortages, especially in math, science, and ESL. For information about current job openings, visit www.as-is.org/classifieds.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit http://arkedu.state.ar.us/teachers/index.html or call 501-682-4475.

California

Beginning Teacher Salary: $34,180
Average Teacher Salary: $54,348
Job Market: There is a need for math, life sciences, special education, English, and bilingual teachers. For information about current job openings, visit www.calteach.com.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.ctc.ca.gov/ or call 888-921-2682.

Colorado

Beginning Teacher Salary: $28,001
Average Teacher Salary: $40,659
Job Market: Teacher shortages in special education, particularly in rural communities. For information about current job openings, visit www.teachincolorado.org.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.cde.state.co.us/index_license.htm or call 303-866-6628.

Connecticut

Beginning Teacher Salary: $34,551
Average Teacher Salary: $53,551
Job Market: Shortages in speech and language, special education, music, science, math, Spanish, and bilingual education. There is an overabundance of elementary teachers. For information about current job openings, visit www.state.ct.us/sde/employ/jobs-main.htm.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/cert/index.htm or call 860-713-6969.

Delaware

Beginning Teacher Salary: $32,868
Average teacher salary: $48,363
Job Market: The job market is good, especially for critical areas such as math, science, and special education. For information about current job openings, visit www.teachdelaware.com.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit http://deeds.doe.state.de.us/ or call 302-739-4601.

District of Columbia

Beginning Teacher Salary: $31,982
Average Teacher Salary: $47,049
Job Market: For information about current job openings, visit www.k12.dc.us/dcps/teachdc/opportunities.html.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.k12.dc.us/dcps/teachdc/certification.html or call 202-442-5377.

Florida

Beginning Teacher Salary: $30,096
Average Teacher Salary: $39,275
Job Market: The job outlook is excellent since more teachers are needed to meet new state class size requirements. For information about current job openings, visit www.teachinflorida.com.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.fldoe.org/edcert/ or call 850-488-2317.

Georgia

Beginning Teacher Salary: $32,283
Average Teacher Salary: $44,073
Job Market: Shortages of special education and foreign language teachers. For information about current job openings, visit www.teachgeorgia.org.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.gapsc.com/TeacherCertification.asp or call 800-869-7775.

Hawaii

Beginning Teacher Salary: $31,340
Average Teacher Salary: $42,615
Job Market: Teacher shortages in special education, secondary math and science, and industrial arts. Also a shortage of school counselors and librarians. For information about current job openings, visit http://doe.k12.hi.us/personnel/jobopportunities.htm.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit http://rrsc.k12.hi.us/tc/ or call 808-587-5580.

Idaho

Beginning Teacher Salary: $25,316
Average Teacher Salary: $39,591
Job Market: Teacher shortages in math, science, special education, music, and art. For information about current job openings, visit www.jobservice.us/iw/jobsearch/js.asp.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.sde.state.id.us/certification/ or call 208-332-6800.

Illinois

Beginning Teacher Salary: $31,761
Average Teacher Salary: $49,435
Job Market: Shortages across the board, but especially in special education, math, and science. For information about current job openings, visit www.isbe.net/teachers/Documents/vacancylist.htm.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.isbe.net/teachers/ or call 866-262-6663.

PHOTO: PHOTODISC

Indiana
Beginning Teacher Salary: $28,440
Average Teacher Salary: $44,195
Job Market: Teacher shortages in special education, math, and science, especially in inner city and rural areas. For information about current job openings, visit http://ideanet.doe.state.in.us/peer/welcome.html.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.in.gov/psb/ or call 866-542-3672.

Iowa
Beginning Teacher Salary: $27,553
Average Teacher Salary: $38,230
Job Market: Teachers needed in special education, ESL, math, and physics. For information about current job openings, visit www.iowaeducationjobs.com/.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.state.ia.us/boee/ or call 515-281-3245.

Kansas
Beginning Teacher Salary: $26,596
Average Teacher Salary: $37,093
Job Market: Shortage areas include special education, secondary math, science, and foreign language. For information about current job openings, visit www.kansasteachingjobs.com.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.ksde.org/cert/cert.html or call 785-291-3678.

Kentucky
Beginning Teacher Salary: $26,813
Average Teacher Salary: $37,951
Job Market: Teacher shortages in rural areas of eastern Kentucky and tremendous demand for special education teachers statewide. For information about current job openings, visit http://apps.kde.state.ky.us/keps/index.cfm.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.kyepsb.net/ or call 888-598-7667.

Louisiana
Beginning Teacher Salary: $28,229
Average Teacher Salary: $36,328
Job Market: Teacher shortages statewide, especially in special education. For information about current job openings, visit www.louisianaschools.net/lde/hr/1317.html.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.doe.state.la.us/lde/tsac/home.html or call 877-453-2721.

Maine
Beginning Teacher Salary: $24,054
Average Teacher Salary: $37,300
Job Market: Shortages of special education, math, science, and foreign language teachers. For information about current job openings, visit www.state.me.us/education/jobs1.htm.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.state.me.us/education/cert/cert.htm or call 207-624-6603.

Maryland
Beginning Teacher Salary: $31,828
Average Teacher Salary: $48,251
Job Market: Excellent, especially in the urban areas, Prince George's County, Montgomery County, and Baltimore City. For information about current job openings, visit www.msde.state.md.us/.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit http://certification.msde.state.md.us or call 410-767-0412.

Massachusetts
Beginning Teacher Salary: $32,746
Average Teacher Salary: $50,293
Job Market: Tight, though shortages do exist in math and sciences, especially in chemistry and physics. For information about current job openings, visit www.doe.mass.edu/mecc/.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.doe.mass.edu/educators/ or call 781-338-3000.

Michigan
Beginning Teacher Salary: $32,649
Average Teacher Salary: $52,428
Job Market: Shortages of special education, math, science, foreign language, and arts teachers, particularly in rural and urban schools. For information about current job openings, visit http://mtn.merit.edu/joblistings.html.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.michigan.gov/mde or call 517-373-3310.

Minnesota
Beginning Teacher Salary: $29,998
Average Teacher Salary: $42,194
Job Market: Teacher shortages in special education, foreign language, math, physical science, art, and music. For information about current job openings, visit www.jobsitemnasa.org/masa.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit http://education.state.mn.us/html/intro_licensure.htm or call 651-582-8691.

Mississippi
Beginning Teacher Salary: $24,567
Average Teacher Salary: $33,295
Job Market: Teacher shortages in special education, math, and all sciences. For information about current job openings, visit www.mde.k12.ms.us/mtc/vacancy.htm.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.mde.k12.ms.us/ed_licensure/index.html or call 601-359-3483.

Missouri
Beginning Teacher Salary: $27,554
Average Teacher Salary: $37,996
Job Market: Teacher shortages in special education, math, science, foreign language, family and consumer science, ESL, marketing, and some fine arts. For information about current job openings, visit www.moteachingjobs.com/.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.dese.state.mo.us/divteachqual/teachcert/ or call 573-751-0051.

Montana
Beginning Teacher Salary: $22,344
Average Teacher Salary: $34,379
Job Market: Statewide teacher shortages, most acute in isolated rural areas, especially in science, math, music, special education, and vocational education. For information about current job openings, visit http://jobsforteachers.opi.state.mt.us/.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.opi.state.mt.us or call 406-444-3150.

*COMPUTED FROM NEA RESEARCH, ESTIMATES DATABASE

PHOTO: PHOTODISC

Top 10 Average Teacher Salaries

2001–02

1. California $54,348
2. Connecticut $53,551
3. New Jersey $53,192
4. Michigan $52,428
5. New York $52,000
6. Pennsylvania $50,599
7. Massachusetts $50,293
8. Rhode Island $49,758*
9. Illinois $49,435
10. Alaska $49,418

U.S. Average $44,714*

J IS FOR JOB

Statistics for Survival:

State by State

Nebraska

Beginning Teacher Salary: $26,010
Average Teacher Salary: $36,236
Job Market: Teacher shortages in math, science, and ESL. For information about current job openings, visit www.nebraskaeducationjobs.com.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.nde.state.ne.us/tcert/tcert.html or call 402-471-2496.

Nevada

Beginning Teacher Salary: $28,734
Average Teacher Salary: $40,764*
Job Market: Teachers needed in math, science, ESL, special education, and computer science. ESL shortages are larger in urban areas. For information about current job openings, visit www.nde.state.nv.us/hrt/hr/employment_department.html.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.nde.state.nv.us/licensure or call 702-486-6458.

New Hampshire

Beginning Teacher Salary: $25,611
Average Teacher Salary: $40,002
Job Market: Within the next three years, 40 percent of the NH-NEA members will retire and more teachers will be needed. For information about current job openings, visit www.ed.state.nh.us/about/employ.htm.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.ed.state.nh.us/Certification/teacher.htm or call 603-271-2408.

New Jersey

Beginning Teacher Salary: $35,311
Average Teacher Salary: $53,192
Job Market: It is a very competitive market. Districts that pay teachers less face shortages in math, science, special education, and foreign languages. For information about current job openings, visit www.njhire.com/.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.state.nj.us/njded/educators/license or call 609-292-2070.

New Mexico

Beginning Teacher Salary: $27,579
Average Teacher Salary: $36,440
Job Market: Math, science, and physical and special education teachers are in high demand. For information about current job openings, visit www.state.nm.us/category/educationnm.html.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.sde.state.nm.us/div/ais/lic/index.html or call 505-827-6587.

New York

Beginning Teacher Salary: $34,577
Average Teacher Salary: $52,000
Job Market: Shortages continue in math and science, however, numerous positions will be lost due to attrition and lack of funding across the state. For information about current job openings, visit www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/career/joblinks.htm.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit http://usny.nysed.gov/licensing or call 518-474-3901.

North Carolina

Beginning Teacher Salary: $29,359
Average Teacher Salary: $42,680
Job Market: Teacher shortages in special education, math, science, and foreign languages, especially Spanish. For information about current job openings, visit www.dpi.state.nc.us/employment.html.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit http://teach4nc.org or call 919-807-3300.

North Dakota

Beginning Teacher Salary: $20,988
Average Teacher Salary: $32,253
Job Market: Teacher shortages in special education, math, science, and foreign languages. For information about current job openings, visit https://onestop.jobsnd.com/vos38000000/.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.state.nd.us/espb or call 701-328-2264.

Ohio

Beginning Teacher Salary: $29,953
Average Teacher Salary: $44,029
Job Market: Teacher shortages in math, science, and special education. For information about current job openings, visit www.ode.state.oh.us/jobs.asp.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.ode.state.oh.us/teaching-profession/teacher/certification_licensure or call 614-466-3593.

Oklahoma

Beginning Teacher Salary: $27,547
Average Teacher Salary: $34,744
Job Market: Teacher shortages, especially in math, science, and special education. For information about current job openings, visit www.sde.state.ok.us/pro/job.html.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit http://sde.state.ok.us or call 405-521-3337.

Oregon

Beginning Teacher Salary: $31,026
Average Teacher Salary: $46,081
Job Market: Teaching jobs available in science, math, and special education. Must be flexible in terms of location. For information about current job openings, visit www.ospa.k12.or.us/.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.tspc.state.or.us or call 503-378-3586.

Pennsylvania

Beginning Teacher Salary: $31,866
Average Teacher Salary: $50,599
Job Market: Teacher shortages in math, science, and special education in rural and inner city areas. For information about current job openings, visit www.teaching.state.pa.us/teaching/site/default.asp.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.teaching.state.pa.us/teaching/site/default.asp or call 717-787-3356.

PHOTO: PHOTODISC

Rhode Island

Beginning Teacher Salary: $30,272
Average Teacher Salary: $49,758*
Job Market: No current shortages. For information about current job openings, visit www.ridoe.net/teachers/ed_employment.htm.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.ridoe.net/teacher_cert or call 401-222-4600.

South Carolina

Beginning Teacher Salary: $27,268
Average Teacher Salary: $39,923
Job Market: Teacher shortages in art, business education, language arts, guidance, industrial technology, foreign languages, library science, math, music, science, and special education. For information about current job openings, visit www.scctr.org/scctr_jobbank_submit.asp.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.scteachers.org/index.cfm or call 803-734-8466.

South Dakota

Beginning Teacher Salary: $23,938
Average Teacher Salary: $31,295
Job Market: Teacher shortages in special education, music, and world languages. Math and science sometimes have shortages, especially in smaller rural schools where more job openings exist. For information about current job openings, visit www.state.sd.us/deca/jobs.htm.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.state.sd.us/deca/OPA or call 605-773-3553.

Tennessee

Beginning Teacher Salary: $28,857
Average Teacher Salary: $38,515
Job Market: The outlook is good, especially for math and science teachers. For information about current job openings, visit www.state.tn.us/education/mtjobs.htm.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.state.tn.us/sbe/tech_licens.html or call 615-532-4885.

Texas

Beginning Teacher Salary: $30,938
Average Teacher Salary: $39,232
Job Market: Teacher shortages in special education, math, science, and bilingual education. Texas currently has about 53,000 classrooms with inappropriately certified teachers, so the state is searching for more certified teachers. For information about current job openings, visit www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline or call 888-863-5880.

Utah

Beginning Teacher Salary: $26,806
Average Teacher Salary: $38,420
Job Market: Teacher shortages in math, science, special education, and ESL. Most hiring occurs in urban areas. For information about current job openings, visit www.utaheducationjobs.com/.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.usoe.k12.ut.us/cert or call 801-538-7741.

Vermont

Beginning Teacher Salary: $25,229
Average Teacher Salary: $39,158
Job Market: Teacher shortages in math, science, special education, and foreign language. For information about current job openings, visit http://vermont.gov/education/education.html.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.state.vt.us/educ/license/index.htm or call 802-828-2445.

Virginia

Beginning Teacher Salary: $31,238
Average Teacher Salary: $41,731*
Job Market: The job market in Virginia is open in most urban and suburban areas. Teacher shortages in special education, math, and science. For information about current job openings, visit www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/JOVE/home.shtml.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/newvdoe/teached.html or call 804-225-2022.

Washington

Beginning Teacher Salary: $28,348
Average Teacher Salary: $43,464
Job Market: Teacher shortages, especially in math, ESL, science, technology education, special education, and Japanese. For information about current job openings, visit www.wateach.com/.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.k12.wa.us/Cert or call 360-725-6400.

West Virginia

Beginning Teacher Salary: $25,633
Average Teacher Salary: $36,751
Job Market: Select teacher shortages in math, science, special education, and foreign language. For information about current job openings, visit http://wvde.state.wv.us/jobs.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit wvde.state.wv.us/certification or call 800-982-2378.

Wisconsin

Beginning Teacher Salary: $27,397
Average Teacher Salary: $42,232
Job Market: Urban areas, such as Milwaukee, need teachers. Teacher shortages in math, science, and special education. For information about current job openings, visit www.wisconsin.gov/state/app/employment.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsis/tel/index.html or call 608-266-1027.

Wyoming

Beginning Teacher Salary: $26,773
Average Teacher Salary: $37,853
Job Market: Declining enrollments have reduced most teacher shortages. For information about current job openings, visit http://onestop.state.wy.us/appview/tt_home.asp.
Certification Requirements: For information, visit www.k12.wy.us/ptsb or call 307-777-7291.

*COMPUTED FROM NEA RESEARCH, ESTIMATES DATABASE

Top 10 Beginning Teacher Salaries

2001–02

1. Alaska $36,294
2. New Jersey $35,311
3. New York $34,577
4. Connecticut $34,551
5. California $34,180
6. Delaware $32,868
7. Massachusetts $32,746
8. Michigan $32,649
9. Georgia $32,283
10. District of Columbia $31,982

U.S. Average $30,719

PHOTO: PHOTODISC

Everyday Low Standards

Love those Wal-Mart bargains? What you save in that big-box store, you may be paying for in your hospital bills—and in deadly hits to public education.

BY DAVE WINANS

In San Miguel, California, first-grade teacher Mary Strobridge and her husband Tim, a 33-year supermarket employee, are experiencing firsthand how Wal-Mart—the store bargain shoppers love to love—may be reshaping the lives of America's wage earners.

And not for the better.

The world's largest corporation soon plans to open 40 general merchandise/grocery "supercenters" in the Golden State, and three of the biggest supermarket chains there are citing Wal-Mart's notoriously meager employee benefits as a reason to demand huge cuts in the health coverage of their unionized workforce—75 percent for new workers and 50 percent for current employees in their central and southern California stores. The result: a bitter strike and lockout of 70,000 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW), of which Tim Strobridge is a member.

I THINK AS EDUCATORS we should tell the managers of Wal-Mart stores that we won't shop there until their workers have the right to organize, to health care, and to a decent living wage. —CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR DAVID TURNER

These are tough times for the Strobridges, not only because Tim, a Ralphs grocery store receiving clerk, is locked out of work, but because of the potential impact of Wal-Mart on the economy around them.

So influential is this stridently anti-union corporation, says Mary, who is president of the San Miguel Teachers Association, that she fears Wal-Mart standards are exerting a downward pull on contract bargaining for educators and furthering the "erosion of the middle class" in America. "My own local and district are now stuck on the health care issue in bargaining, and only health care," she says. "Why do we have to settle for inferior benefits because minimum-wage workers do?"

That view is shared by the California Teachers Association (CTA), which has offered unwavering support to the supermarket strikers. "Teachers have been wonderful in not crossing the picket lines," says Strobridge, "and many CTA local chapters have 'adopted' struck stores by supplying picketers with water and snacks and walking the lines."

"Solidarity can't just apply to one group, like teachers," she stresses. "It has to stretch out to all unions, from retail clerks to electricians." And in the case of Wal-Mart, she and other California activists say, the more activism, the better.

In fact, they say, if you're concerned about growing out-of-pocket costs for your medical care, worried about kids who arrive in your school without health coverage, or alarmed over the power of the pro-voucher lobby in this country, you might seriously consider mouthing off every time you walk through a Wal-Mart door.

The nation's largest private sector employer, retailer, and grocer has not become the model of corporate efficiency for nothing. With nearly 3,500 U.S. stores, it racked up an $8.2 billion net profit in 2002 and rang up $1.5 billion in sales the day after last Thanksgiving by promising "Always Low Prices"—and delivering.

How? By squeezing out extra pennies from everything from vendor prices to employee compensation—and using some of those proceeds to support anti-public education causes.

For example, campaign finance records show that John Walton, son of Wal-Mart founder Sam Walton, donated money for pro-voucher ballot initiatives in California in 1993 and Michigan in 2000 and for a Colorado tuition tax credit measure in 1998. More recently, Walton donated money to pro-voucher state political action committees and pro-voucher school board and legislative candidates.

And, according to tax records, the Walton Family Foundation, largely funded with proceeds from Wal-Mart stocks, funneled $28 million in 2002 to the CEO Foundation and the Children's Scholarship Fund, which promote taxpayer-funded vouchers and private tuition tax credits. Another $300,000 in grants went to the Institute for Justice, a right-wing legal group that defends voucher programs and fights state constitutional barriers to them.

A MODEL WITH COSTS

But voucher support is just the start. As alarming, say California educators, is the impact the company's employment standards are having on the broader economy.

As the *Los Angeles Times* concluded last fall in an extensive series: "The company's size and obsession with shaving costs have made it a global economic force. Its decisions affect wages, working conditions, and manufacturing practices—even the price of a yard of denim—around the world." But in the view of many, not in ways that are healthy to workers.

"As we're seeing in the California grocery strike, the mere

The 'Wal-Mart Effect' in California

Three of California's biggest grocery chains are citing Wal-Mart's notoriously low benefits as reason to demand huge cuts in health coverage for their unionized employees. The result: a strike and lockout of 70,000 grocery workers. Oakland NEA member **David Turner,** with cap and picket sign behind the "Boycott Safeway" banner, joins a strike support rally at a San Francisco supermarket.

This is the closest California first-grade teacher **Mary Strobridge** will ever get to a Wal-Mart store.

presence of Wal-Mart is like a huge neon sign announcing the way to the low road and blocking the entrance to the high road," says Jared Bernstein, a senior economist at the Economic Policy Institute, which researches economic issues facing working families. "Firms that operate under a model based on higher quality jobs, unions, and low turnover—and higher prices—will be hard-pressed to compete, and thus the quality of those jobs will either deteriorate, or they could even disappear."

Why does this matter to educators? Let's start with medical care. Across the nation, the issue of decent, paid health care has become a "monster at every bargaining table," explains California high school counselor David Turner, an executive board member of the Oakland Education Association. "Time and again, we hear from school employers, 'Everybody else is giving up something; you need to accept health benefit cuts, too.'"

Wal-Mart's non-union workforce of nearly 1.2 million employees helps subsidize bargain basement store prices through pitifully low wages; a bare-bones health plan (with family coverage costing $139 to $277 a month, depending on deductibles); a six-month waiting period for full-timer health care (and a two-year wait for part-timers); and an annual turnover rate of at least 45 percent.

Wal-Mart reports that only 46 percent of its employees are covered by some part of its health plan. The rest receive either taxpayer-supported health care—which competes head-on with public education in many state budgets—or simply go without. And when their ailing, uninsured children arrive in public school classrooms, "Wal-Mart really becomes an education issue," says Turner.

NO UNIONS WELCOMED

It's become a union issue, too. The corporation is well-known for fighting unionization tooth and nail. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has issued complaints—the rough equivalent of indictments—against Wal-Mart for ejecting UFCW organizers from its stores, harassing or interrogating union activists (without witnesses), conducting unlawful surveillance of union supporters, and undermining union elections with illegal promises, raises, or threats.

And a federal judge has found that Wal-Mart illegally refused to bargain over job function changes it imposed after meat department workers in a Texas store voted for UFCW in a 2000 NLRB representation election. The company demoted these skilled meatcutters to "sales associates" and eliminated meatcutting from all of its stores in favor of prepackaged meat.

Wal-Mart tries to "isolate" union supporters from other workers in its stores and "uses peer pressure to verbally intimidate them," charges Al Zack, UFCW's assistant director of strategic programs. "It's a pretty scary feeling, being all alone and swimming upstream."

So what can educators do? Wal-Mart founder Sam Walton used to say, "The customer is always right," so here's an invitation. "If NEA members who are Wal-Mart customers would tell Wal-Mart associates that they are union members and proud of it," says Zack, "and tell them they would have the support of a lot of their customers who are also union members if they formed a union, that would start to break through [the fear]."

Zack also recommends that NEA local affiliates let Wal-Mart managers know they're being watched for illegal anti-union activities. David Turner likes the sound of that. "I think as educators we should tell the managers of Wal-Mart stores that we won't shop there until their workers have the right to organize, to health care, and to a decent living wage," he says, "and I think our locals should encourage our members to shop elsewhere." nea

FOR MORE, go to www.walmartwatch.org.

PHOTO TOP: GARY KAZANJIAN

Writers Bloc

Part grassroots movement, part summer institute series, the National Writing Project has changed lessons and lives.

BY MARY ANNE HESS

Instead of charting new courses for her high school English students, Jan Kwiatkowsky found herself switching on autopilot at times. After almost 20 years in the classroom, she was starting to consider herself merely a "lecturer and test giver." But her teaching life was transformed when she attended the National Writing Project summer institute at the nearby University of Maine.

There she gained greater insights on how to convey her love for the craft of writing to her students. "It was an opportunity for teachers to get together and show what works best for them," says Kwiatkowsky, a teacher at Bucksport High School in coastal Maine. "If something works for you, you love to share it."

More than 2 million K–16 teachers from all disciplines have attended Writing Project programs, developed at 175 university-based sites in all 50 states. Launched in 1974 in an effort to fill the void in writing instruction for teachers from all disciplines, the Writing Project is a professional development model that has grown into a unique network of colleagues teaching colleagues about writing. It brings teachers from kindergarten through the university level together in its programs, says Mary Ann Smith, a former teacher who now works as the director of governmental relations and public affairs at Writing Project headquarters at the University of California at Berkeley.

Federal money ($17 million in 2003) is the Writing Project's largest single funding source, with support also coming from foundations, corporations, universities, and K–12 schools. Programs vary—from a Saturday morning session on creating suspenseful stories to five-week invitational summer institutes where teachers take a hard look at their classroom practices, delve into the latest research on writing, and develop their own writing skills.

As children get older, "we tend to stifle creativity, and that's a mistake," says Kwiatkowsky. "I emphasize voice and tell students that's what will make their writing unique." Although she assigns her share of term papers and essays, she believes that putting all the emphasis in that direction "is cheating the child."

Her students write proposals for new businesses and present them to officials in their small town. Despite the test-driven trend toward formulaic writing, Kwiatkowsky has also placed a new emphasis on creative writing. "I want the kids to dig down deep."

She digs, too, and writes poetry along with her students. A favorite activity has students writing prose or poetry about a childhood memory that's uniquely Maine. Kwiatkowsky and her students joined other Maine schools in recording their writing for the Writing Project's Rural Voices Radio collection.

Most Bucksport students are middle class and plan to attend college. About 600 miles to the southwest in Youngstown, Ohio, Betsy Johnquest teaches many 10th graders from families struggling with poverty. Like Kwiatkowsky, she wants her students to let their voices resonate.

That drive springs from her experiences at a 2002 Writing Project institute at Kent State, where participants were asked to search their attics and closets for pieces they'd written and share them with the group. "By the time we'd finished, we knew each other well," she recalls.

That fall, Johnquest asked her students to share childhood

PHOTOS THIS PAGE: WILLIAM D. LEWIS

writing, and she assigned them to write about the first time someone read to them. Those who couldn't remember asked their mothers or grandmothers to reminisce and, in the process, created new family bonds. "They all wrote so much and everyone wanted to read theirs out loud...we were all becoming writers."

In years past, typical assignments consisted of journal writing or perhaps a paragraph about the topic of the day from a premade calendar. "I think kids looked on it as busy work," she says. "Now their writing is something they want to save. It's about their families. They're making portfolios, adding pieces they're writing on their own or from their past, poems they wrote when they were little. They'll hang on to these portfolios for the rest of their lives."

Students also keep spiral notebooks where they free write, list vocabulary words, paste examples of writing they like, or attach pictures to spark ideas. "I tell them to think of the notebooks like a bank where they make deposits and withdrawals," she says. Although it's not required, students often read her their free writing. Writing, she says, is a way for teenagers to vent their anger and still get positive feedback.

Establishing one-on-one relationships with kids is important to Johnquest, and getting kids to write makes that easier. "After you've heard a student read a story about his father being in prison, you make a connection." She often suggests books in which students can learn how others cope with similar problems.

But Johnquest doesn't ignore writing mechanics. Tired of incomplete sentences and bad usage, she injects a healthy dose of grammar into the curriculum, reviewing parts of speech and common errors.

About 65 percent of the school goes on to college or technical schools. Johnquest aims to give students experience in the kind of writing that will give them more confidence to talk about themselves and their ideas in college and on the job.

Before Johnquest signed up for the Writing Project institute, she says, burnout was looming. "I was in a routine, it was boring for me and my assignments were just okay. Now, teaching excites me again," she says. "I consider myself a writer and I'm passing that experience on to my students. I was an average teacher before this. Now I think I'm pretty good."

I AM FROM DOWN EAST MAINE.
I AM FROM COOL DAMP MORNINGS
WHEN FIRM WILD BLUEBERRIES
FILL CRACKED OVERWORKED BUCKETS.
FROM FRIGID OCEAN WATER AND BRISK SALT AIR
I AM FROM THE LAND OF INNER STRENGTH AND CHAPPED HANDS.
I AM FROM A HARDWORKING PEOPLE
FROM LONG DAYS AND QUIET EVENINGS.
I AM FROM DOWN EAST MAINE.

BY DANIELLE MENESES AND BRITTANY HOWE, *two students on the National Writing Project's Rural Voices Radio Vol. II c. 2001*

Add crashing waves, twittering birds, a gentle guitar, and distinctive regional voices and you have the sound of *Rural Voices Radio*, the first spoken word production of the National Writing Project, in collaboration with the Annenberg Foundation for Rural Choice. The programs showcase writing from students and teachers talking about places, from Maine to Nevada, that they call home. The three-CD set, which can inspire writing about any community, is free to teachers by contacting nwp@writingproject.org. Since 2001, the award-winning series has aired on public radio stations in the United States and Canada.

A related resource is the new *Rural Voices: Place-Conscious Education and the Teaching of Writing* ($16), edited by Robert Brooke and his colleagues at the Nebraska Writing Project.

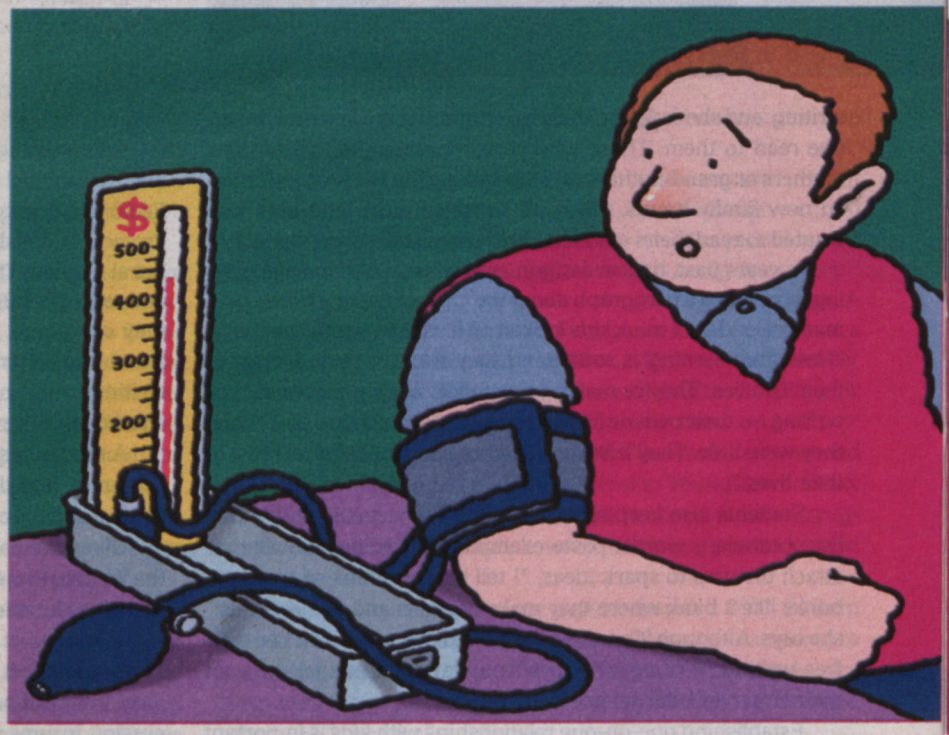
Given the national emphasis on writing in all content areas, the Writing Project sees itself as a resource for math and science, as well as humanities, teachers. Enrollment in its summer writing institutes is competitive. Applications are online at local Writing Project sites, accessed through www.writingproject.org. Information about other in-service programs, online discussion forums about writing, publications, and much more is also available on the Web site. nea

Above and right: The National Writing Project inspired Maine teacher **Jan Kwiatkowsky,** shown here working with her students. Left: Youngstown, Ohio, English teacher **Betsy Johnquest** helps her 10th-grade students express themselves through their writing.

PHOTOS TOP AND RIGHT: MICHAEL YORK

Medi-

The newly passed Medicare law is bad medicine, with p active employees and undermine the safety net Medi



You're getting squeezed—and everyone knows it. Health care premiums are swallowing larger and larger chunks of the compensation pie at the bargaining table. Teachers and ESPs foot a bigger share of the prescription drug bill at the pharmacy. And retired members' pension checks get lighter each year as premiums and out-of-pocket costs go through the roof.

It's no wonder Congress last year turned its eye to health care. Promising a revamped Medicare program, lawmakers seemed poised to bring much-needed relief from rising drug costs and gap-riddled health insurance coverage.

Instead, NEA experts and other analysts say, provisions in the Medicare law signed by President Bush in December, once in place, could have Active and Retired members alike reaching for the aspirin—or something stronger. In addition to privatizing Medicare and gifting $12 billion in subsidies to private insurers to enable them to "compete" with government-run Medicare, Congress slipped in a provision for new tax breaks that experts say could cause the premiums for traditional comprehensive health insurance to soar.

The Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act's 678 pages stray so far from the original goal of helping seniors with high drug costs that some irate Retired members say it's No Child Left Behind all over again—a lofty plan, bound to wreak havoc as the fine print of the law spins itself out.

"NEA lobbied very hard for a strong Medicare bill, but we wound up opposing passage of the present law because we feel it will do more harm than good," says NEA's Lynn Ohman, citing the provisions to privatize Medicare and the inclusion of tax-free Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) as particularly dangerous. "The law takes government assistance with health care costs in the wrong direction."

The Medicare law's passage rankles all the more because the bill was held hostage to politics, with many analysts contending that President Bush and congressional leaders were determined to push through a bill—no matter how flawed—before the 2004 elections. They got a big boost when the AARP swung its support to the bill in a highly controversial endorsement that upset many of its 35 million members. Even with AARP's endorsement, the Medicare bill was dead in the House of Representatives until—in a bitterly contested move—Republican leaders dragged out a roll call vote for close to three hours in the middle of the night before convincing two of their party to switch votes.

TRADITIONAL PLANS ERODING

Nobody is more irked by the deal Congress cut than teachers and ESPs, who deal every day with skyrocketing drug costs and gaps in health insurance.

Take Billings, Montana, elementary teacher Allan Audet. "When I started teaching 12 years ago, my insurance was 100-percent paid [by the school district] for my entire family," says Audet, currently president of the Billings Education Association (BEA). "And we had great pharmacy benefits—you paid $7 for every prescription."

But those days are long gone. Health insurance for BEA members who elect a plan offering family coverage with a $500 deductible has climbed to $782 a month, of which the district pays only $300. Premiums have gone up steadily by 10–15 percent a year, Audet says, but jumped by 40 percent one year. The latest danger: health care costs are rising so much that some BEA members have hit the $1 million lifetime benefit maximum on their policies due to a serious illness.

ILLUSTRATION: DIGITALVISION

SCARE

rovisions that will erode traditional health insurance for care provides for retirees. And that's just for starters.

Vital Signs

An American health care system in crisis

44 MILLION AMERICANS—many of them working—lack health insurance. Fifty-seven percent of workers who earn $7 an hour or less are not offered any insurance by their employer.

THE COST OF HEALTH CARE PER EMPLOYEE rose 10 percent in 2003, on the heels of a 15-percent increase in 2002, says a report by Mercer.

EMPLOYERS HAVE SHIFTED an unprecedented share of health care costs to workers. In 2003, the employee share of premiums for family health coverage for PPOs jumped from 53 to 58 percent; for HMO family coverage, the corresponding rise was 50 to 57 percent. "With pay increasing by only about 3 percent on average, for some employees higher premium contributions wiped out increases in total compensation," says Mercer.

THE PERCENTAGE OF LARGE EMPLOYERS offering retiree medical benefits has fallen by one-half since 1993. Only 28 percent of large employers offered coverage to pre-Medicare-eligible retirees in 2003, and 21 percent offered it to those who were Medicare eligible.

SOURCES: PUBLIC CITIZEN, MERCER HUMAN RESOURCE CONSULTING

Even so, Audet says Billings employees have better insurance than many other Montanans. "Some of Montana's small towns are paying premiums that are twice what we pay now," he says.

The seriousness of the health insurance crisis in Billings and across the country (see "Vital Signs") explains why experts are so concerned the new Medicare law will worsen existing problems.

Among the problems in the law:

NO CONTROLS on runaway drug costs. In negotiating the Medicare bill's provision for prescription drug coverage for seniors, Congress had the opportunity to use the leverage of 40 million Medicare beneficiaries to negotiate lower prices from drug manufacturers. Since rising drug prices are one of the chief drivers of overall health care cost increases, price controls would have helped both Active and Retired members keep expenses down. Instead, in the face of fierce lobbying by the drug industry, the new law specifically forbade the federal government from negotiating with suppliers to rein in drug costs. Congressional negotiators also declined to include a provision that would have made it easier to reimport drugs from Canada (which has been used as a stopgap measure to bring cheaper drugs to U.S. citizens). No wonder Larry Koenck, a Retired member of Education Minnesota, called the new Medicare law "a blank check for drug companies to rip off the American consumer."

The actual prescription drug benefit for seniors—which will cost $400 billion over 10 years—attracted the bulk of media attention on the Medicare debate. But seniors say the benefit, which won't even be available until 2006, falls far short. Those on Medicare who choose the new insurance will pay premiums of at least $35 per month for a benefit that pays only some of their drug bill—and pays nothing at all for expenses between $2,251 and $5,100 per year. Those who lack any prescription drug coverage could benefit, but many others will continue to absorb huge out-of-pocket costs.

THREATS TO RETIREE health coverage. The Congressional Budget Office estimates 2.7 million retirees stand to lose their employer-sponsored prescription drug coverage once the bill takes effect. Since many employers already are slashing or eliminating their retiree health insurance, the new law will punch another hole in the safety net.

The new law set aside $87 billion in tax breaks and subsidies for private employers to continue providing retiree heath coverage but did not extend all the tax benefits to public employers, who will now pay comparatively more to provide health coverage. More bad news: the final version of the law eliminated Section 631, a vital provision in the Senate bill NEA helped craft that would have protected an employers' ability to provide health insurance benefits to those retiring before they become eligible for Medicare at age 65. Without such a provision, some employers may reduce benefits for pre-Medicare retirees, says Al Campos, an NEA lobbyist.

NEW TAX BREAKS for the wealthy that could seriously undermine comprehensive health insurance. Under the new law's provision for Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), employers and workers could put money into an individual employee's account. The money would be deposited on a tax-deductible basis, and the employee could withdraw it to pay for health expenses tax free.

HSAs pose a threat to traditional health care coverage, experts say. For starters, HSAs are likely to exacerbate the trend toward plans with larger and larger deductibles, since they can only be used with plans that have a deductible of $1,000 or higher. More-

over, HSAs are more likely to appeal to younger and healthier members, while older and less-healthy members are liable to stick with a more traditional insurance option, explains Tom Bilodeau, a researcher with MEA-MFT.

"It's a built-in adverse selection process," says Bilodeau. "It will make the traditional plans much more expensive for those who remain in them." In fact, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a think tank, predicts HSAs could cause premiums for comprehensive health care to more than double.

MEDICARE itself is at risk from the law's provisions for privatizing the program. Despite its problems—including higher costs and the influx of retiring baby boomers—traditional Medicare is a tremendous success story. In 1963, only about one-half of the elderly had health insurance; virtually all do now. Medicare has played a key role in reducing the poverty rate among the elderly and increasing life expectancy, adds Chris Jennings, a health care analyst.

AS MANY AS 2.7 MILLION RETIREES stand to lose their employer-sponsored prescription drug coverage under the Medicare law. With many employers already cutting retiree health insurance, that punches another hole in the safety net.

Moreover, studies show that Medicare "meets or beats the performance of the private sector in managing health care costs," Jennings adds.

But congressional leaders determined to privatize Medicare won out. The new Medicare law sets up a demonstration project that will force Medicare to compete with private plans in six metropolitan areas beginning in 2010. As many as 6 million Medicare enrollees will be forced into the experiment, and premiums for those who opt to remain in traditional Medicare could rise as much as 30 percent, experts say. Meanwhile, the law also gives $12 billion to private insurers to entice them to provide drug coverage in undesirable markets.

"If privatization is such a good idea," wondered *Washington Post* columnist E.J. Dionne Jr., "why do the private insurance companies need such big subsidies to enter the Medicare market?" Such provisions will put Medicare on shakier footing, advocates fear.

"We fought for a bill that would have placed a prescription drug benefit in the present Medicare program," Barbara Matteson, vice-president of NEA-Retired, concluded when the dust had cleared. "Instead, this law will eventually dismantle Medicare as we know it." nea

—JOHN O'NEIL

For More To learn more about the Medicare law, see the January 2004 issue of *This Active Life* (www.nea.org/retired) or link to the Medicare Rights Center (www.medicarerights.org).

Time To Undo the Damage

SINCE 1997, drug companies and their brand-name trade group (the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, or PhARMA), have spent more than $500 million to influence legislation and employed 635 lobbyists—more than one for every member of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

Last year, that investment paid off handsomely.

After years opposing the addition of a prescription drug benefit to Medicare, the drug industry changed course in keeping with the political tide. Then it went to work blocking key measures that would have meant a price break for consumers. The result? Analysts predict the pharmaceutical industry will reap a windfall from the new Medicare law—as high as $139 billion in additional profits over eight years, according to the Health Reform Program at Boston University's School of Public Health.

If that gets your dander up the next time you fork over your cash at the pharmacy counter, you're not alone. NEA and its allies lobbied to strengthen the Medicare bill to help rein in excessive drug costs but, in the end, drugmakers and private insurers carried the day.

The fight's not over yet, though. "NEA will be working with members of Congress to amend the defects in the bill," says NEA lobbyist Al Campos. The chief priorities? Legislation to allow the Department of Health and Human Services to negotiate drug prices for Medicare recipients, just as the Veterans Administration does for veterans (saving taxpayers millions of dollars), as well as provisions permitting the reimportation of drugs from Canada. (Costs for brand-name prescription drugs in Canada, in many instances, are far cheaper than in the United States.)

You can influence the debate on prescription drugs and health care as Congress considers possible changes. NEA's suggestions:

GET INFORMED. Learn more about prescription drugs and the health insurance crisis from organizations like Families USA (www.familiesusa.org). Then visit NEA's Legislative Action Center at www.nea.org/lac. The LAC will carry the most recent news on specific health care legislation and NEA's position. You also can sign up to be a "cyber-lobbyist" at the LAC site.

SHARE YOUR STORY. "Write your member of Congress about why adequate health insurance is important for you, and to encourage them to sponsor or co-sponsor legislation to correct defects in the Medicare bill," says Campos. You can also encourage your local media to cover the impact of health insurance cuts.

HOLD THE POLITICIANS ACCOUNTABLE. Make sure that your Congressional representatives support NEA's positions on health care issues, and carefully evaluate the health care positions of candidates for this fall's elections.

ILLUSTRATION: KEITH SKEEN

Feeling 'Left Behind' by Washington?

If you're an ESP, it's not your imagination. Three things to know.

When President George W. Bush first sent Congress his proposal for the so-called No Child Left Behind law—also known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)—curiously absent was any mention about the role of education support professionals in public schools.

Nowhere in that January 2001 document did the president use words such as "paraprofessional" or "aide," even though the law mandates that Title I paras demonstrate, through one of three ways, that they are "highly qualified."

This wasn't a one-time oversight. Since ESEA was signed into law, says Joel Packer, NEA manager of ESEA policy, "the Administration has failed to insist that states provide *all* three options to paras seeking to become 'highly qualified.'" It has also failed to insist, he adds, that states cover any related out-of-pocket costs for paras trying to meet the demands of the law.

Making matters worse, reports NEA ESP Quality Director Al Perez, support professionals are experiencing "position cutbacks and higher workloads" resulting from state budget cuts. The White House's failure to lobby for the full level of ESEA funding authorized by Congress in 2001 has only compounded the problem. Congressman George Miller, a leading co-sponsor of the bill, recently estimated that ESEA has been "shortchanged" by $17 billion.

The president vetoed OSHA regs that addressed driver wrist injuries.

Has the Administration turned a deaf ear to the needs of ESPs? Not a bad question, given some of its other recent actions. Consider: In the last few years the White House has:

1. Scrapped innovative health and safety standards. On March 20, 2001, President Bush signed Senate Joint Resolution 6, which repealed groundbreaking "ergonomic" standards drafted by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

The rules would have helped ESPs in 23 states reduce the workplace risk of musculoskeletal disorders sustained through repetitive motions (such as bus driving or computer use), awkward work postures, or the lifting and shifting of disabled students.

Echoing corporate lobbyists who fought this proposal, the president called the standards "unduly burdensome." In his veto address, Bush pledged, "We will work with Congress, the business community, and our nation's workers to address this important issue."

Three years later, that work has not begun.

2. Forced through rules that could deny overtime pay to millions of workers. The White House has steadfastly ignored bipartisan House and Senate votes in favor of preserving overtime rules that have been in effect since 1938. These provisions require that workers covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act—including many ESPs—be paid at a time-and-a-half rate for work performed in excess of 40 hours a week.

By threatening to veto a $328 billion domestic funding bill in January, Bush forced Congress to approve radical, business-backed changes to those rules. According to the AFL-CIO, the new regulations, effective March 31, could exempt as many as 8 million workers from overtime protection—including many ESPs.

NEA, which lobbied with other unions and civil rights groups to block this rule change, is now analyzing its full impact on ESP jobs.

3. Targeted the jobs and rights of many federal workers. The Administration has shaped a labor relations agenda that should concern any ESP activist fighting against privatization of school support functions—especially transportation and food services—or pushing for collective bargaining rights.

According to the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the largest union of federal workers, the White House has proposed handing as many as 850,000 federal jobs to private contractors through the "competitive outsourcing" process, in which traditional federal functions are awarded to the lowest bidders (see more at www.afge.org).

Equally chilling: The White House has begun to deny collective bargaining rights to employees in the departments of Defense and Homeland Security—including airport baggage screeners.

Transportation Security Administration (TSA) managers are "ill-prepared to manage the federal government's airport screener workforce," says AFGE President John Gage. "As a result, TSA screeners face unsafe working conditions, abusive supervisors, discrimination, and unfairly applied standards. Most screeners are fearful of pointing out potentially dangerous practices for fear of immediate dismissal."

FOR MORE more on the federal OSHA ergonomic standards vetoed by the president, go to www.nea.org/neatoday/0102/news14.html.

More ESP news in this issue:

- Teacher-ESP local gains stellar contract — *Page 12*
- Oregon affiliate wins vote, new members — *Page 19*
- Apply now for NEA ESP Technology Grants — *Page 53*
- NEA releases two new ESP publications — *Page 60*

PHOTO: MANGINELLI PRODUCTIONS

Torchbearer

Jane Goodall has long been the world's most renown student and friend of the chimpanzee—not to mention one of the great scientists of our time. She turns 70 next month, but it hardly means she's settling down. Rather, she's passionately trumpeting a new cause: teaching young people to build a better, more humane world—for themselves and all our animal cousins.

JANE GOODALL HAS BEEN EDUCATING PEOPLE FOR DECADES, and lighting fires. Her books and films have allowed millions to live vicariously alongside humanity's closest relatives, the chimpanzees of Africa. But these days Goodall is on a new mission, urging humans—especially kids—to be better friends with the Earth and with their fellow creatures, both human and animal. She now devotes much of her enormous personal energy to building a new international youth organization, based largely in schools, called Roots and Shoots. She talked recently with *NEA Today's* Alain Jehlen.

After all these years studying chimpanzees, you've changed gears. What are you trying to accomplish?

GOODALL: Well, central to part of it, still, is trying to conserve the chimps and their habitats in Africa. And to conserve the chimps, you have to conserve the forest. So many of Africa's problems are related to the unsustainable lifestyles of the developed world and the increase in population. But the problems are not just in Africa—they are around the world. I've met so many young people who seem to have lost hope and become bitter, and I feel this awful shame that we've destroyed so much of the planet since I was their age.

This feeling of frustration led to the youth groups?

GOODALL: Yes. You know, I can kill myself to try and save a piece of forest with chimps in it. Somebody else can kill themselves trying to save a piece of forest with orangutans in it, and we can be successful. But, if we're not raising new generations to be better stewards than we've been, what's the point?

Tell us about this group.

GOODALL: It started as a series of clubs in high schools in Tanzania in '91. At first, it developed quietly, with the help of about six teachers. But it has really taken off. The name is symbolic: roots make a firm foundation, shoots seem tiny, but to reach the light they can break through brick walls. And, if we see the brick walls as all the problems that we've inflicted on the planet—environmental and social problems, cruelty, crime, drugs, war—this is a program of hope. Hundreds of thousands of young people around the world can break through, and can make this a better world.

And are they doing that?

GOODALL: Yes. What began in a very small, modest way gradually started to spread. Today, we have over 6,000 active groups in 87 countries around the world. The programs are from preschool through the university level. Every group tackles three different kinds of hands-on projects: to make the world a better place for 1) the animals around them (including domestic ones), 2) for their own human community, and 3) for the environment. And, since 9/11, we've really pushed our peace initiative, helping young people to understand people of other cultures, religions, and creeds.

Give us some examples of the work.

GOODALL: In China, a group of high school kids in a rural area formed themselves into the Green Eyes Roots and Shoots and became very concerned about the way hunters were catching wild animals, and the way they were treated in markets, being killed for food. They went out, they got photographs, and though they had death threats, they really began to change attitudes. The young man who started it was 15!

In America, a middle school group in Ft. Worth, Texas, goes out and they are slowly, by hand, removing the exotic, invading plants from an area of prairie, and gradually restoring it to what it was before.

In Japan, another group of middle school kids are going into old people's homes, taking little gifts to the old people, and cheering them up and telling them stories. High school groups in many countries are going into senior citizens' complexes and recording oral history. Nothing makes an old, lonely person more happy than to share the stories from when they were young. And everybody's learning.

Who starts and leads these groups?

GOODALL: They're created mostly in schools by teachers. And since 9/11, they have proliferated. It's racing across mainland China. The most important message is that every individual makes a difference every day. In Israel, they're getting people together from different factions, Palestinians, Arab Israelis, and Jewish Israelis.

So you're helping young people see their connections with each other, with animals, and the environment. That seems parallel to your earlier work. Would you say this is your central contribution to science?

GOODALL: Well, I suppose it's blurring the line that used to be so sharp between animals and us. Once you've spent time with chimpanzees, you see that they think and have emotions. First of all, there was all the tool-using, which really staggered everyone, the fact that chimpanzees in the wild could use hand-made tools. They had foresight and were clearly thinking. And you can't spend time with chimps, or

even watch films, and not realize that they're experiencing emotions very like those that we call happiness, sadness, fear, despair.

When you first began making these observations, how did people react?

GOODALL: When I began, I was told I was doing it all wrong. The first paper I ever wrote, in '63, was about tool-using. And when it came back, everywhere I put "he" or "she" for chimps, it was crossed out and "it" was substituted. I crossed out the "its" and sent it back. And they published it with the "he's" and the "she's." It was the first victory.

But after 40 years, you're still fighting this battle.

GOODALL: You know, I don't bother to fight it anymore. I just do it. There are still the "its" out there. Most of the resistance comes from either people doing invasive, painful research on animals, or people who are dealing with animals in unpleasant ways like intensive farming or circus training.

At right, a Roots and Shoots group removes exotic plants from a watershed in Oregon. Above, children talk with "Dr. Jane" in San Marino, California.

What changes would you like to see in the way animals are treated?

GOODALL: Oh, so many ways. The cruelty is vast and it's worldwide—laboratory experimentation on animals, training of animals to perform. Intensive farming is one of the very worst because it involves millions of animals. And, it's unbelievably cruel.

Should there be no medical experiments on animals?

GOODALL: At least 80 percent of the research is unnecessary. A lot of it's just for cosmetics. And alternatives exist. But, there's no law, at least in this country, to enforce the use of alternatives, once they've been proven to be effective. Many of these alternatives are far safer.

What we need is a different way of thinking. Let's get together, with our brilliant brains, and find ways to eliminate this barbaric practice as soon as possible.

You clearly want children to experience the joy that animals can bring to life. How did you get started yourself?

GOODALL: Well, I seemed to be born loving animals. We lived in London, didn't have much money. So I didn't have many animals to watch. But when I was four and a half, we went off on a holiday to a farm. I can remember meeting cows and pigs and horses, first time ever, face to face. One of my jobs was to collect the hens' eggs. But I became curious: Where was the hole on the hen big enough for the egg to come out? I was asking everybody, and clearly nobody satisfied my curiosity. So, I decided to find out for myself. I climbed into a hen house and waited. I must have waited at least four hours, and the family had no idea where I was. It was getting dark. They called the police.

Finally, Mom sees this excited little girl rushing towards the house, all covered with straw. Instead of scolding me, as so many others would, she saw my shining eyes and sat down to hear the wonderful story of how a hen lays an egg.

I always tell kids, even if other people have seen what you've just seen a thousand times, it doesn't take anything away from your feeling of excitement and pride when you do it for yourself.

That passion turned to chimpanzees and other apes. Are today's children going to witness the extinction of the great apes?

GOODALL: We've almost reached the point of no return. But not quite. There is a growing awareness. The problems are so huge that I think the most we can hope for is to have large areas of forest made completely safe, big enough for the populations to be self-sustaining. But, many, many, many will go. They're bound to.

You're going to be 70 years old this April. Do you think you're ever going to retire?

GOODALL: I planned a couple of years ago to get younger at each birthday, but other people don't seem to realize that. I certainly couldn't do what I'm doing now when I was 30. No way. I wouldn't have had the energy.

Why do you think that is?

GOODALL: Well, partly, I suppose, I've got this mission. You know, when you're determined, you just do it. nea

Roots and Shoots

ROOTS AND SHOOTS NOW CLAIMS 6,000 GROUPS IN 87 COUNTRIES. The United States has nearly 2,500 groups with 60,000 student members from the preschool to university level. Some are after-school clubs; others are classes with service learning projects. They work on everything from building birdhouses to volunteering at homeless shelters. If you're interested in getting your students connected, go to www.janegoodall.org/rs/index.html for suggestions for how to start, project ideas, and an online sign-up form. Roots and Shoots has developed a set of pilot-tested high school lesson plans and materials about individuals, the environment, and our society, based on one of Jane Goodall's books. Find them at www.lessonsforhope.org. One Roots and Shoots high school group in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, is working on the lessons in partnership with a group in Durban, South Africa, connected by videoconference. For more on the lesson plans, Lessons for Hope, or on Goodall's latest television special, *Jane Goodall's Return to Gombe*, see pages 60 and 57.

PHOTO LEFT: DON MILICI; PHOTO RIGHT: THE JANE GOODALL INSTITUTE

Rockwood NEA: Solid As a Rock

A Missouri local puts high membership to work for young and veteran teachers—and turns new hires into new Association activists.

NEA LOCAL AFFILIATE:
Rockwood (Missouri) NEA (RNEA).

THE MAGIC NUMBER:

RNEA is one of Missouri NEA's 12 "solid rock" locals, each of which has a membership totaling at least 80 percent of potential. "That's the magic number," says outgoing RNEA President Cathy Westbury, a middle school counselor. "We're at 85 percent, which commands respect when we speak on behalf of our 1,200 teachers. When the district wants to talk to teachers, it realizes it must talk to RNEA."

JUST NO COMPETITION:

Rockwood school board members and administrators talk *only* to RNEA, not a competing Missouri organization that forages for teacher dues. Small wonder—this NEA local affiliate shares the high-achieving district's child-centered philosophy and works to quickly solve problems where they happen, starting with candid discussions between principals and trained RNEA building representatives.

BARGAINING WITHOUT A LAW:

There's no teacher bargaining law in Missouri and local labor-management relations "aren't always a love feast," acknowledges Westbury, but none of that stops the Rockwood district from doing the intelligent thing. The school board voluntarily negotiates a Master Agreement (a binding union contract) with RNEA and reassures newly hired teachers that it's perfectly right and natural to be an Association member.

SIGNING 'EM UP EARLY:

RNEA recruits most of its members at an annual joint district-Association new teachers' luncheon that features pasta, presents, and pieces of wisdom from district officials, RNEA leaders, and young building reps. This year, "I talked about the value of membership, the power of 85 percent, and the fact that we settle problems at the building level, before they go to Central Office," notes Westbury. Before the food cooled, 54 of 56 newbies signed Association cards.

ANOTHER GENERATION'S TURN:

Westbury, a veteran, says it's really the younger luncheon speakers who moved pens to paper. She's yielding her presidency to fifth-year teacher Allison Seitz, because "it's time to give this local to the younger teachers." The newer folks are ready to take charge because RNEA has involved many of them in Association work from their first days in the classroom.

Building reps keep their ears open for comments about new teachers doing good things, like community work. "When we hear they have potential, we ask them on a local committee to do something low-level, like help screen school board candidates," says Westbury. "That's Organizing 101—if you don't ask, they don't show up."

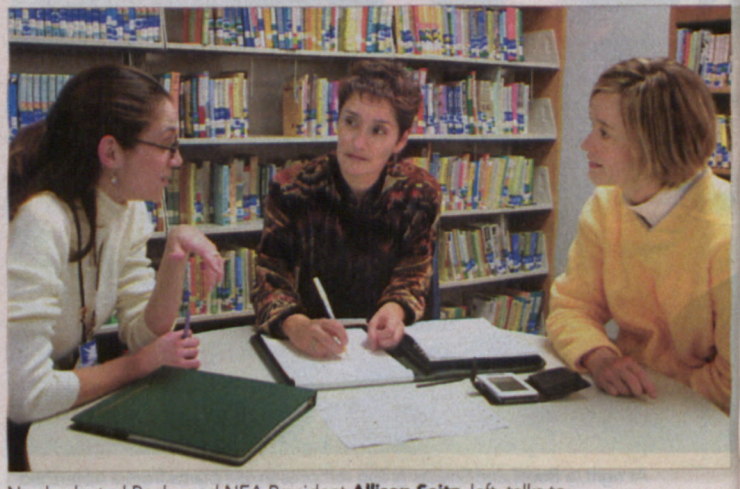
A PATH TO THE PRESIDENCY:

Seitz, a seventh-grade language arts teacher at Rockwood South Middle School, got early leadership experience through her preservice involvement in the NEA Student Program. When Seitz started with the district, RNEA eased her into union advocacy through a "shared" building rep position. From there, she advanced to local secretary, bargaining chair, and then local president—at age 27.

Philosophically, younger and veteran teachers "are no different," this local leader stresses. "All good teachers come to the profession with the same qualities!"

A MATTER OF SUPPORT:

RNEA is determined to give quality teachers, regardless of age, the support they need to survive and thrive. The local and district have jointly created a "Teachers Assisting Peers" program, apart from the evaluation system, to strengthen teachers in their first five years. RNEA has also won inclusion of new teachers in building staff development once reserved for veteran teachers, negotiated stipends to help promising practitioners obtain National Board certification, and bargained contract language that addresses workload reduction.



Newly elected Rockwood NEA President **Allison Seitz**, left, talks to outgoing President **Cathy Westbury**, center, and local Secretary **Stephanie Lombardo** about RNEA's spring membership campaign.

"Now, whatever workload issue can't be resolved at our monthly [labor-management] 'forum' goes to the grievance procedure," Westbury notes. "But we rarely have grievances; our forum committee solves most everything."

A VOICE FOR EVERYBODY:

Seitz stresses that high Association membership makes educators' voices louder, sends a message about the value of teachers' work, and creates a "positive culture" for new practitioners. "I'm proudest," she says, "when young teachers speak up for themselves—to find a place where they belong, to give back, and to get time for their career and personal lives."

—DAVE WINANS

FOR MORE, contact Allison Seitz at rst03@rockwood.k12.mo.us.

PHOTO: CHRISTIAN GOODEN

Should we suspend out-of-school suspension?

YES

The only way out-of-school suspension could be effective is if the school system could mandate that these students have to go to work with their parents or report to a community service detail.

Students at our school view out-of-school suspension as a vacation. Who wouldn't? They do not have to get up early, they do not have to listen to teachers lecture or require them to be awake.

Unless students are given a negative consequence for their behavior, out-of-school suspension reinforces it.

TRENA VICK Special education teacher, Tallapoosa, Georgia

I teach students with severe emotional disturbances in grades four through eight. In my experience, out-of-school suspension provides students a way out. We have moved to having students stay in school, complete assignments, and do community service work for the behavior that led to their suspension.

Too many parents work or are not able to discipline their child at home if an out-of-school suspension is assigned. Our policy is to keep the student in school as much as possible. Generally, students who get suspended are the same students who have truancy issues.

MARY JENSEN Perham, Minnesota

If a student brings a gun to school, suspend them for three months. If a student threatens the life of another student or teacher, expulsion is called for.

But for all other offenses, including use or possession of drugs, there should be in-school suspension. Take away the students' freedom: lock them down with three-minute recess breaks for drink and toilet use, have them eat lunch in one room, no recess play privileges. Have them eat an hour later than the rest of the students when food might be a little cold and milk might be a little warm. Most suspended students have parents whom they can get around.

With in-school suspension, you keep control of the students. They know they have broken the rules and cannot get away. Students who are disruptive hate to be by themselves.

CARLO MARCHETTI Fourth- and fifth-grade special education teacher, Kihei, Hawaii

NO

I agree that for some children, out-of-school suspension is a bonus, but there are times when only that will do. Some situations can only be resolved by distancing the student from school and peers for a time. In a rural area where transportation is not readily available, this is hard for some students to bear even for one or two days. The time away to reflect on their behavior may help them acknowledge that they did make a mistake. If the parents or guardians treat the suspension as a punishment for the child, not just a day off, there is an added bonus.

Some students are concerned about the effect of suspension on their grades. I once had a student who was very dejected when he discovered that he would not be able to make up any work missed while he was suspended. He actually completed an extra project on his own to help his grade. Even good students sometimes make mistakes that warrant severe consequences.

JANICE MCLAUGHLIN High school special education teacher, Gretna, Virginia

I believe the public school experience is a privilege. Students should conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. When they violate school rules and rules of common decency, the privilege should be taken from them.

Students who take a casual attitude toward suspension and attendance should find themselves making up lost days on weekends (possibly with their parents), mandatory summer school, and in extreme cases, retention.

All privileges carry responsibilities!

MITCHELL LAWRENCE Middle school teacher, Ann Arbor, Michigan

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

Should we suspend out-of-school suspension?
To vote, visit our Web site at www.nea.org/neatoday and see the results instantly.

Should we ban cell phones in school?
The tally on the question in the last NEA Today:
45% Yes 55% No

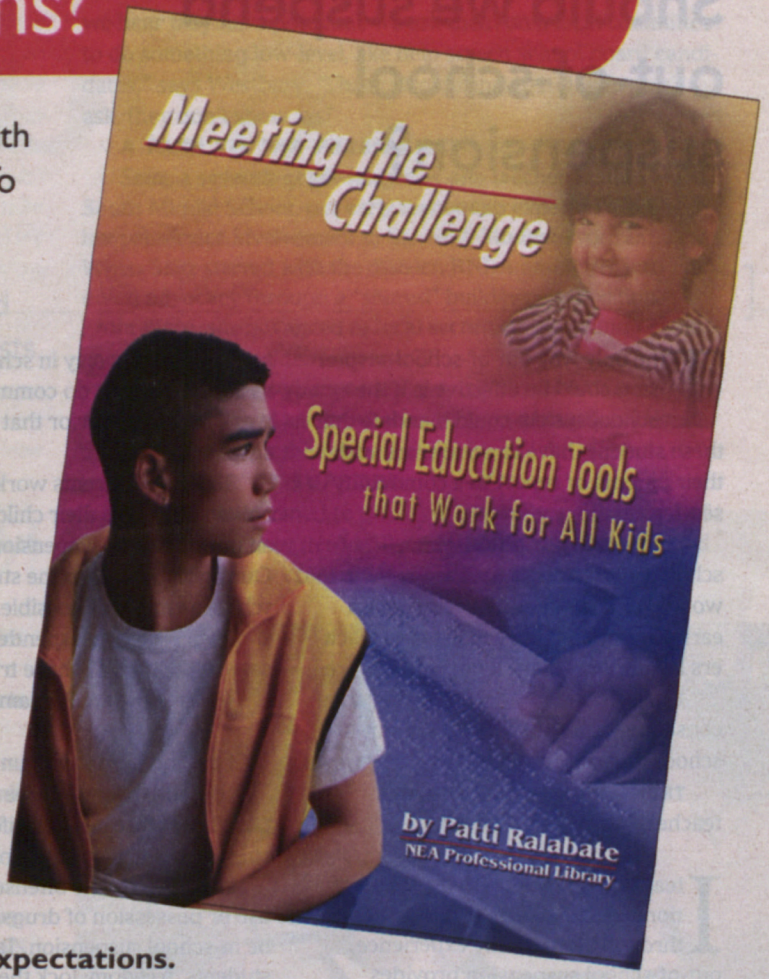
Should we reward good grades with money and prizes?
If you'd like to take part in this future Debate, send a brief note to Alain Jehlen, **ajehlen@nea.org.**

We should not eliminate out-of-school suspension. In fact, chronic discipline cases, male and female, should be given mandatory military service or jail if they continue to disrupt classrooms. Judges in family court should have this alternative for the hard core, chronic discipline problems. It's time we took back control of our schools and got the chronic discipline problems into the military where they can learn something of value.

SKIP SHEPHARD High school special education teacher, Tucson, Arizona

ILLUSTRATION: DIGITAL VISION

Are you "meeting the challenges" of today's classrooms?



Classrooms today are full of students with various skill levels and special needs. To be an effective teacher, you need effective strategies to help students struggling to overcome academic or behavioral difficulties. *Meeting the Challenge: Special Education Tools that Work for All Kids* provides specialized resources designed to help you meet the individual needs of any student. This valuable toolkit addresses six critical areas:

- ✓ **Evaluating struggling students using classroom-based assessments.**
- ✓ **Observing behavior and positively addressing behavioral challenges.**
- ✓ **Using a collaborative team process.**
- ✓ **Developing educationally relevant student expectations.**
- ✓ **Providing accommodations and modifications.**
- ✓ **Communicating effectively with parents.**

This book is filled with useful ideas and practical, timesaving strategies, along with sample worksheets and other perforated forms to copy and use "as is" or modify for your own use. Whether you're a general education teacher or a special educator, you'll find tools you can use every day.

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When you are working with a small group, how do you keep the rest of your class **engaged?**

Charm

First, I make sure the rest of the class has something challenging but fun to work on (my current class loves math mysteries.) Then, I tell them that for every five minutes of quiet time they give me, they will earn five minutes of fun time. The fun time can be used for extra centers or recess, or they can wait until they've earned enough for a fun movie. It works like a charm!

LIZA VAUGHN Third-grade teacher, Knoxville, Tennessee

'Can Do'

As a National Board Candidate enrolled in the Accomplished Teacher Institute, I learned a great way to keep my third graders busy at a "low roar" while I ran small reading groups.

I have always written my agenda for the morning or afternoon in the corner of the blackboard, but now I divide it into a "Must Do" list and a "Can Do" list.

The Must Do list comes first. That might be spelling and vocabulary, a related worksheet, a grammar page, and a journal entry. The Can Do's might include working in the computer corner or in the library corner on a beanbag. Some days, there might even be a puzzle at the back work table. If students get noisy, the Can Do's become unavailable.

After two or three noisy guys have their "Can Do" privileges taken away, students know what to do (or not do) to keep them. Now it takes very little effort to run my literature circles.

MARY HANSON Pasadena, California

Projects

When I work with a small group of students, I engage the others in projects that don't require constant attention, such as:

- Placing a large variety of rocks with several gemology books on butcher paper so students can try to classify and label each stone right on the paper.
- Creating a "Cooperation" bulletin board. Students can search through newspapers and magazines or draw their own pictures to depict the theme. They staple their pictures onto the bulletin board to make a collage.
- Spreading a long piece of butcher paper across the room where students can quietly draw a mural, background scenery for a play, maps, etc.

LYNN HARCZAK Fourth-grade teacher, Norridge, Illinois

ALL THAT FUN STUFF in the room is for Wise Time. Now you are free to move about the cabin—excuse me!—the classroom. —MARIAN BROVERO

Skill-Building

As a bilingual teacher of a self-contained, combined grades five and six class, I alternate between grade levels throughout the day. While I work with one group, the others first work on homework assignments. Then they choose from several activities that supplement instruction and sharpen thinking skills. These include working on computers with reading or mathematics programs, completing a 1,000-piece puzzle, and playing games such as Battleship or chess. They can work together in groups as long as they don't get too loud, so these times also give students opportunities to develop their social skills.

MARY YALVAC Bayonne, New Jersey

Timed rotation

I have the other students working in other groups, each meeting a specific learning objective related to the academic subject. I use a timer. When it rings, the groups rotate.

With these learning groups, the children don't get bored. I still use my extra set of eyes and ears to maintain classroom management.

J. DIANNE ANDERSON-NICKEL Elementary and middle school music and literacy teacher, Phoenix, Arizona

Work Wisely

Next summer, plan all the interesting areas that may be set up in your room (and plan to change them at least twice a month). On the first day of school, slowly introduce all those spots where learning will occur independently.

Life begins to fall into two categories: Work Time and Wise Time (which is after required work has been turned in.)

To whet appetites, bonus work carries rewards but is not compulsory, and all that fun stuff in the room is for Wise Time.

Now you are free to move about the cabin—excuse me!—the classroom. The key is planning and sharing the daily schedule with the class.

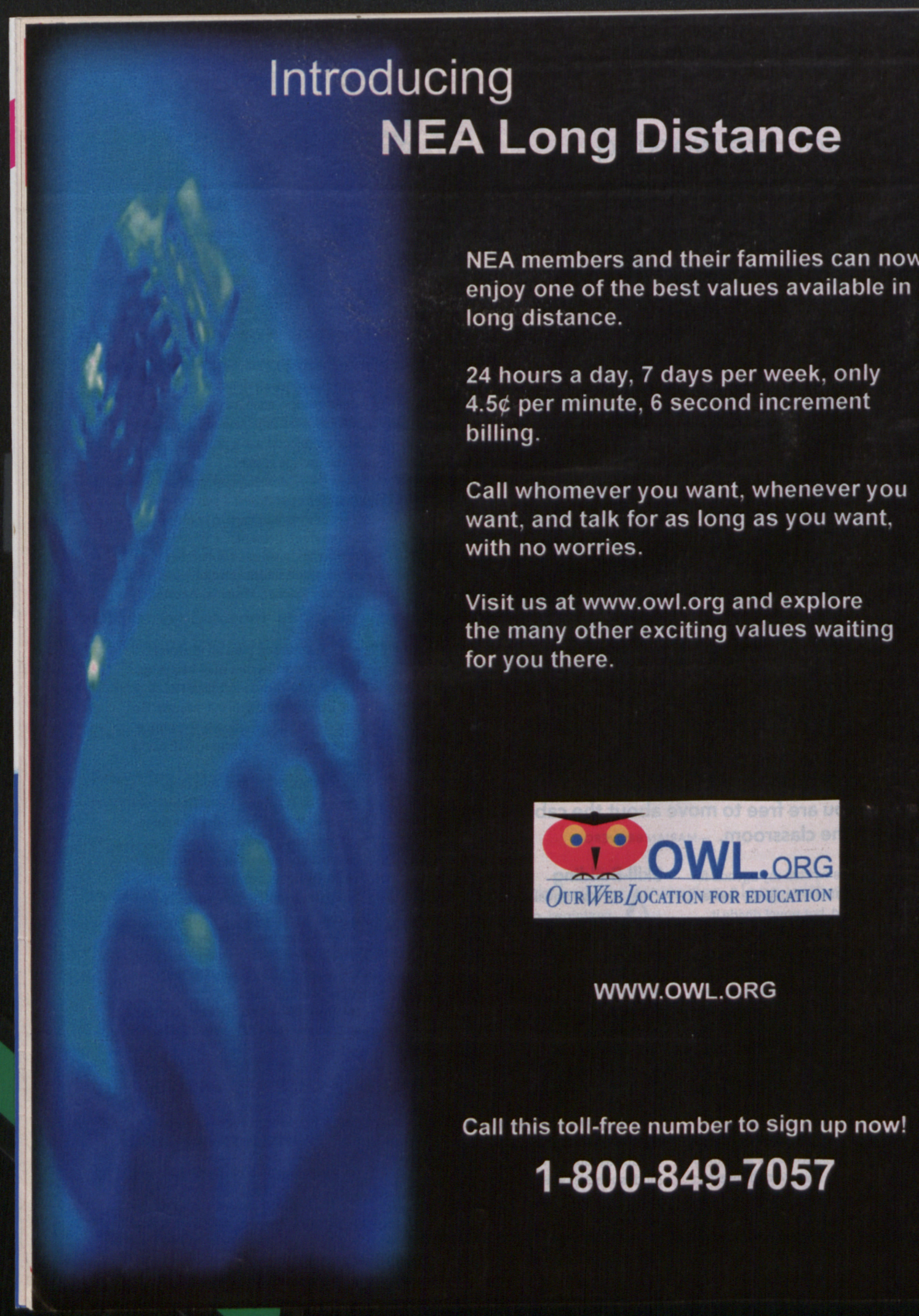
MARIAN BROVERO Retired second-grade teacher, West Palm Beach, Florida

GOT AN ANSWER?

What do you do when you need a little extra money for a classroom project?

E-mail your answer to **dilemma2@list.nea.org.** Or send by regular mail, or fax to 202-822-7206. Include your name, city, state, and job. If published, you will receive an *NEA Today* mug!

ILLUSTRATION: TED PITTS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Ouch!!

What's the best way to keep your feet comfortable all day?

We asked this question in January. You answered:

ANSWER: Buy shoes later in the day when feet are more likely to be swollen. Buy soft-soled leather shoes, with low heels and an arch support built in, if needed. Keep an extra pair in the closet and change midday. Buy basic styles, no trendy narrow straps.

PAT BUB (QUEEN OF HAPPY FEET!) *Retired teacher, Telford, Pennsylvania*

ANSWER: I teach second grade and those smart kiddos keep me on my toes! Unfortunately my desire to look fashionable often overrides the practicality of wearing comfy shoes. But I keep mint foot lotion in my desk, or in the staff lounge refrigerator for an extra cooling effect. Whenever I have a break, I kick off my shoes and give myself a mini foot massage. My feet feel instantly re-energized.

JALAYNE JUSTICE *San Marcos, California*

ANSWER: I swear by a combination of sneakers and a bar stool! I have sneakers in several colors to match my clothes. I keep a barstool-height wooden chair at the front of my room. If I don't have to write on the board, I perch on my chair. Class discussions can be much more in-depth when the students see you sitting with them instead of standing over them.

CYN HARNEW *Seventh-grade teacher, West Chicago, Illinois*

Incentives

I have been assigned to teach a high school alternative special ed class of very unmotivated students. Does anyone have suggestions on what I might possibly do to get these kids motivated?

STEPHEN STROUSE
Music specialist, Barnegat, New Jersey

ANSWER: I am not speaking from experience, but I think the video *Stomp* would appeal. I would introduce unusual percussion effects and try to get some performing going. Maybe some spoken chorus/rap type pieces—they introduce notation and rhythm. Kids like to perform, and if you can integrate their music into what they are learning, it helps. Music can reach kids that other subjects can't. Let them see your love and passion for the subject.

DAWN PATELKE *Band and choral teacher, Maynardville, Tennessee*

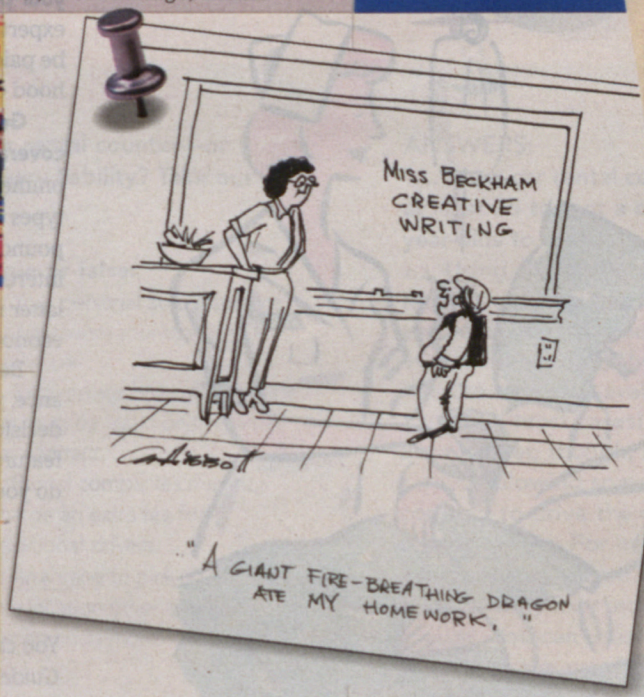
ANSWER: I have been teaching middle school special education students for some time. One successful unit was having them edit their own magazine. Each student chose a topic. Some chose music, others cars, another was motorbikes. They wrote reviews, opinion pieces, editorials, persuasive pieces, fictitious letters to the editor, and ads. They added pictures. This unit took most of April, May, and June, but it took little effort to keep them working.

MARSHA LODGE *Hebron, Connecticut*

Teacher Mom

Next year, my son will be attending the middle school where I am a teacher. It is very likely he will be in some of my classes over the next three years. Does anyone have any suggestions or experiences to share?

JULIE YATES *Craig, Alaska*



Share your wisdom, ask your question!

What's the fastest way to get rid of a headache?

Send your answers to this or to other questions on this page to **ajehlen@nea.org.** Or, send us a question you'd like to see posted. Please include your name, your job, and the community and state where you work.

For a weekly e-mail of questions, answers, and practical classroom tips, join Works4Me, one of NEA's most popular and useful services. Just send the message "subscribe Works4Me" (without the quotation marks) to **Lyris@list.nea.org.**

ILLUSTRATION BOTTOM: GEORGE B. ABBOTT

Don't Be Shortsighted on Long-Term Care

Is long-term care insurance for you? These tips will guide you through the maze.

BY MARY ROWLAND

The statistics are frightening. As baby boomers age, more of them are expected to spend time in a nursing home. The Department of Health and Human Services projects that 65-year-olds have a 40 percent chance of entering a nursing home in their lifetime. Nursing home care now costs an average of $158 per day, and that's bound to rise.

These scary numbers have whipped up interest in long-term care insurance, a market that can be treacherous to the uninitiated. Long-term care insurance is still relatively new—coming to market in the last 25 years or so—and the policies can seem complicated and daunting. If you are looking for a policy, you need to be armed with facts. Here are some tips from the experts:

Age 55 is a good time to consider buying a policy. After the early 60s, initial premiums increase significantly.

Don't compare policies based simply on price. Some companies have entered this market only to withdraw within a few years because they've found it too difficult. You want an insurer that's committed to the market and has a reputation for treating policyholders fairly. Check A.M. Best, Standard & Poor's, Moody's and Weiss for company reputation. To check claims-paying experience, go to the Web site of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners at www.naic.org.

Study policy terms carefully. Most policies pay when the insured is unable to perform two or more activities of daily living, such as bathing, dressing, or eating. Many frail, elderly people who need help do not qualify under that definition. You should be certain you understand what you're buying before you actually need it.

Most policies provide a daily benefit for a specified number of years. Daily benefit limit and benefit period are key variables in a policy. **To determine what daily limit you need, check the cost of a nursing home stay in your area.**

Benefit periods range from one year to lifetime, with premiums going up as the benefit period increases. The waiting period before benefits begin also varies, with premiums going down as the waiting period increases. **Don't increase the waiting period too much just to save money.** Part of the value of the insurance is knowing that you have some protection. If you're forced to wait six months to a year before you begin to collect benefits, it can seem interminable.

Insurers can raise premiums for an entire class of policyholders. **Make sure you understand under what conditions your premiums can change.** Some experts suggest buying a policy that will be paid off in 10 years to avoid the likelihood of premium increases.

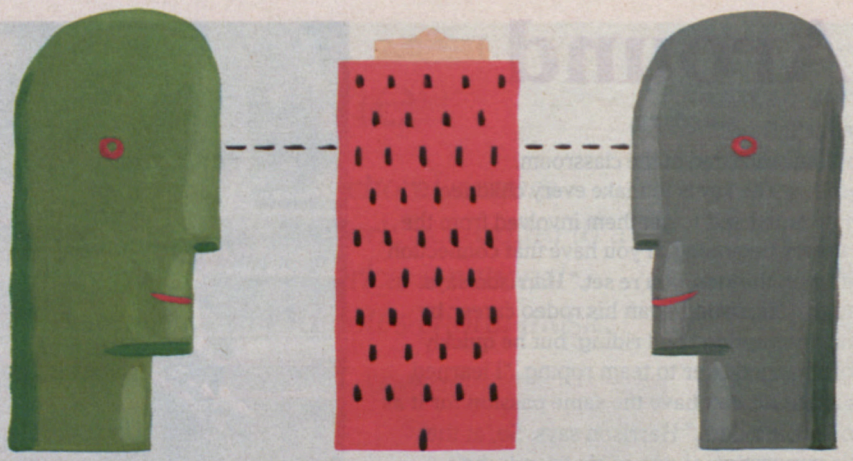
Get inflation protection for your coverage. Five percent is typically recommended. There are generally two types of inflation protection: the compound interest option and the simple interest option. If you're 70 or older, the latter may be the more sensible and economical option.

Before buying long-term care insurance, you'll need to make a number of decisions about which policy terms and features are best for you. Be prepared to do your own research.

ILLUSTRATION: KARA FELLOWS

FOR MORE

You can get a free copy of *A Shopper's Guide to Long-Term Care Insurance* from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners at www.naic.org.



Apartment Shopping 101

Just got that diploma? Before you shop for a new apartment, you'd be wise to hit the Web for a little research.

First, you need to figure out how much you can afford to pay for an apartment. A rule of thumb is to plan on spending no more than 30 to 35 percent of your gross (before-tax) income, but that ignores other factors such as your credit card bills or car payment. For a more accurate picture, go online to a Web site like www.springstreet.com and use a financial calculator.

Once you're plugged in to the Internet, you can find an apartment just like you find an airline fare or a rental car.

And, if you're thinking of relocating, it's not a bad idea to look up the average cost of an apartment in your new location, which you can calculate at springstreet.com. For example, the average two-bedroom apartment in Richmond, Virginia, costs $683 a month, a little more than the $672 average in Tucson, Arizona, and $372 a year more than the $652 in Columbus, Ohio. But watch out if you've got your eye on Boston, where the average two-bedroom rents for $2,287!

Once you've found your ideal spot, you can pick up decorating tips (try www.hgtv.com) or even rent furniture online (check out www.bfr.com or www.rentfurniture.com).

Adding Power to Your Pension

For most teachers and education support professionals, especially those who spend their career in public schools, a defined-benefit pension plan will be their financial lifeblood after they cash their last paycheck.

But you can add power to your pension with a 403 (b) retirement account, which many employers offer. A bonus: employers will often match your contributions to the plan, up to a limit. Plus, the money is deducted from your paycheck on a pre-tax basis, which allows your earnings on the money to grow tax-free.

To find out if your employer offers a 403 (b) plan to supplement your pension. If so:

INVEST IN IT. Get details on investment options from your human resources department. Find out how much your employer contributes.

CHECK THE VESTING SCHEDULE, which provides a timetable for how soon the money your employer contributes belongs to you.

WHEN YOU CHANGE JOBS, be certain you protect the tax-deferred status of your 403 (b) by rolling it into an IRA.

www.neamb.com

Check out the NEA Member Benefits Web site to learn more about saving for retirement, insurance programs, and other topics. No member dues dollars are ever used to support NEA Member Benefits programs.

Pass the Quiz, Get the Keys

Are you paying too much at the car rental counter—or even exposing yourself to unnecessary liability? Take our pop quiz on auto rentals:

1. How old must a person be to rent a car?

A. 18
B. 21
C. 25
D. Old enough to be a licensed driver

2. You can often save money by:

A. *Reserving early*
B. Asking for weekend specials and discounts
C. Using the Internet to reserve
D. Arranging a package with airline and hotel accommodations
E. All of the above.

True or false:

3. Your personal auto insurance policy covers your use of a rental car.
4. Each person who will drive the car must be listed on the rental car contract.
5. Rental companies may not charge an extra fee for *additional drivers.*
6. Arranging to pick up your car at a location other than the airport costs more.

ANSWERS:

1.C. Most car rental companies require that you be at least 25 to rent a car. (Although a few allow 21-year-olds to rent.)

2.E. Using any of these tactics may save you money. Rental companies have different classes of cars. If you reserve early, you can often have your choice at a reduced rate. Always ask the rental agent: Is this the best rate available?

3. TRUE (in most cases). Be sure to check with your auto insurer, though, before you pick up the keys.

4. TRUE. Allowing someone who is not listed in the contract to drive the car could have serious consequences. For instance, your insurance company may refuse to pay for damages incurred.

5. FALSE. They may indeed charge extra.

6. FALSE. You can usually save money by arranging to pick up the car downtown or in another location. Sometimes it makes sense to go to your hotel and pick up the car the following morning.

ILLUSTRATION: DAN YACCARINO

Clowning Around

Jason Harrison is, and always will be, the type of person who likes to work a crowd.

THE SEVENTH-GRADE SCIENCE and social studies teacher at Garrison Middle School in Walla Walla, Washington, has spent his life entertaining, whether he's in the classroom or in the rodeo arena, where he performs as a clown.

As a rodeo clown, Harrison performs short acts designed to interest the sport's youngest fans. His impromptu songs—which change with the rodeo's location—quirky dance steps, and acrobatic stunts always bring the crowd to its feet. Harrison believes it's important to draw each child into the fun and make the child feel important. It's a philosophy that holds true both in the arena and in the classroom.

"The key is to make every child feel wanted and to get them involved from the very beginning. If you have that connection with the kids, you're set," Harrison says.

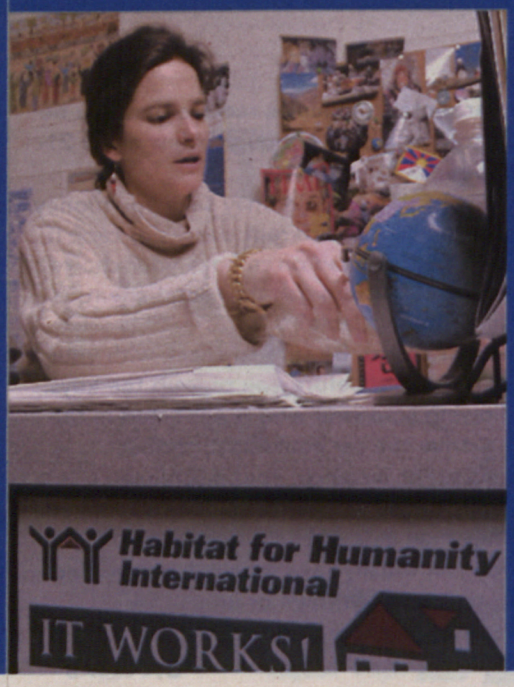
Harrison began his rodeo career by "attempting" bull riding, but he quickly changed over to team roping. "I learned that I didn't have the same passion for it as other riders," Harrison says. So, at the suggestion of one of his friends, he decided to see if he could make it as a rodeo clown. After three years of performing, he hasn't looked back. The reactions he gets from the audience rev him up every time he steps into the arena.

"The excitement of entertaining—to see kids react to you so positively—that's one of the greatest parts of what I do," Harrison says.

—URMILA SUBRAMANYAM

A Helping Hand

While many educators welcome summer as a time for much-needed relaxation, Natalie Nienhuis spends her breaks far from the comforts of home.



NIENHUIS, A WORLD STUDIES TEACHER at Watertown High School in Wisconsin, spent the last two summers as a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity, building houses in developing countries.

"I love to travel abroad, but I don't like to do the touristy thing," she insists. "So, it's really the perfect solution."

Nienhuis has co-led two builds at village locations in Papua New Guinea and Botswana, and she plans to do similar work this summer in Guatemala. During her trip to Papua New Guinea in 2002, she lived with the local villagers and befriended many of the children during her stay. The trip to Botswana last year was more difficult, she says.

"Botswana was harder to be a part of because we didn't stay on site and the abject poverty was palpable," she says. "They had no land to farm and few chickens for food." Nonetheless, the villagers showed amazing commitment to the project. Children, many of them orphans, helped volunteers carry concrete blocks for the homes, while villagers mixed mortar by hand.

"The interaction with the kids and people I meet there gives me so much," says Nienhuis. "It's a great way to spend the summer."

—AMIR SHOUCRI

PHOTOS TOP: DALE FOLKERTS; BOTTOM: STEPHANIE JUDGE

Swing Time

Seventy-six percent of choral singers participate in charity work, according to a survey by Chorus America, a national organization that promotes choral music.

THAT DOESN'T SURPRISE PIANIST AND MUSIC TEACHER Fran DePalma-Iozzi, who has spent the past 14 years tickling the ivories for her philanthropic swing band.

Reeds, Rhythm, and All That Brass emerged about 30 years ago with 17 musicians, one singer, and two missions: preserve 1940s big band music and donate their earnings to charity. To date, the group has raised more than $1 million for organizations such as the American Heart Association and Habitat for Humanity. Band members vote before each performance about whether the benefactor is a bona fide charity. Otherwise, the band's benevolence could be abused by wealthier organizations clearly capable of hiring a paid band.

"We don't want to take a job away from regular musicians who are earning a living," says DePalma-Iozzi, who teaches at James Caldwell High School and Jefferson Elementary School in New Jersey.

After years of entertaining, DePalma-Iozzi still finds fulfillment in the band's charitable endeavors. In fact, at times she feels a little guilty for taking so much pleasure in the pastime.

"It's joyful to feel that you're doing something meaningful," DePalma-Iozzi says. "It gives me back much more than I give."

—CHERYL ROSS

Frontier Teacher

Retired Nebraska member Janet Gardner takes students back to a time when math was called arithmetic and cold pancakes or potatoes were the lunch of choice.

IT'S STILL 1888 at the Flowerfield School in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, where Gardner has served as a "school marm" for four years. Rebuilt as part of the Banner County Historical Museum, the school now serves groups of fourth graders who visit to walk in the shoes of real frontier schoolchildren. Since 1987, more than 10,000 students have taken part in the unique program, which is offered each fall.

Always striving for authenticity, Gardner dons a bonnet, brings her lunch in a pail, and wears a dress of her grandmother's. And students always ask her about the dunce cap that sits on a stool; fortunately, she's never had to use it. But it does spark a discussion on discipline in the late 1800s, when misbehavior was cause for a spanking or a rap on the knuckles with a pointer. Before lunch, students wash their hands with lye soap, and they aren't allowed to bring items like bottled soda or processed, packaged foods. In addition to working on their penmanship, students read from McGuffey Readers (circa 1879) and have a spelling bee at the end of the day.

Gardner loves being a school marm, and after 20 years of teaching she's still learning about Nebraska history. "This has been such a wonderful experience," she says, "and it's a great way to keep my hand in teaching."

—LORINDA BULLOCK

GOT A TIP?

Do you have an interesting story idea? Contact Sabrina Holcomb, section editor, at **sholcomb@nea.org.**

PHOTO TOP: NORMAN Y. LONO; BOTTOM: TOM DOWNEY

One size does not fit all.

Every child can learn, but parents and teachers know that children need individual attention based on their individual needs.

It's a lesson Washington still needs to learn.

Despite campaign promises of education reform, the new so-called "No Child Left Behind Law" imposes a one-size-fits-all approach on children, and demands that all children meet the same level of achievement in the same amount of time, regardless of individual differences.

Despite campaign rhetoric about adequate funding for public education, schools and teachers began the year faced with a host of mandates that waste scarce resources on things children need **least**: more paperwork, more bureaucracy, and more standardized tests.

In tough economic times, with states and communities severely cutting budgets, a new federal law that diverts resources from the classroom makes no sense.

Visit NEA's Web site at www.nea.org/lac. Find out what your Association is doing to fix this law and additional steps you can take today to make your opinions count in Washington. We need to tell President Bush and Congress to fix the law to recognize children as individuals and support teaching that meets their needs.

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Great Public Schools for Every Child

resources

51 **Book Excerpt** How To Get Grants and Free Stuff.
52 **Take Your Job Hunt to Cyberspace** Web sites that can help you in your job search.
53 **Grants and Awards** NEA Friend of Education Award, ESP Tech Grants, and more.
55 **In Print** It's time to talk spring.
55 **OWL.org** Beat the March doldrums with activities for education professionals.
56 **What's Up at HIN** Asthma-friendly schools, pregnancy prevention, and fitness update.
57 **On TV** Jane Goodall returns to Gombe; Women's History Month biographies.
58 **On the Web** Women's history Web sites.
59 **Heads Up From NEA Member Benefits** NEA-Sponsored accounts and travel discounts.
60 **Take Note** Online lesson plans, ESP Quality Workforce Series, and more.
61 **Diversity Calendar** Find out when the first U.S. Black newspaper was published.
62 **Books by NEA Members** Struggling readers series tells the adventures of Pup Daddy.
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NEA Professional Library, www.nea.org/books

[BOOK EXCERPT]

Imagine someone just told you where to find a pot of gold. It's a bit out of your way, but if you get there, the money is yours. Sounds like a no-brainer, right? Wrong. Each year schools miss out on their pot of gold. According to the Foundation Center, there are nearly 42,000 grantmaking foundations in the United States. In one year alone, those foundations gave $13.8 billion in funds to organizations. Of that amount, only 5.25 percent went to primary and secondary schools. That leaves millions of dollars untapped by educators. The money is there for the asking.

How To Get Grants and Free Stuff aims to make it easier for you to wade through the grant writing process. Six teachers share practical tips and step-by-step instructions for getting grants and free stuff for your classroom.

- Nancy Norem Powell, a high school math teacher, has become a whiz at completing grant applications and proposals. Powell describes what each section of a grant proposal requires and why grants get rejected.
- Elementary teacher Susan Midori Jones describes how she and her colleagues created a team to apply for grants. Team members are assigned specific parts of the grant application to complete. For educators who have trouble finding the time to write, she offers suggestions for creating a time line to meet grant deadlines.
- Janice Tolley describes how she brought a planetarium and a young astronaut program to her elementary school by applying for grants.
- Rhode Island civics teacher Maureen Spaight provides information on the types of grants available and sources to use in researching grant programs.
- Arkansas teacher Joan Reid and her colleagues at Skyline Heights Elementary School have received hundreds of free products and services from local businesses—by simply asking for them. She also gives tips on using parents as resources for free materials and offers advice on soliciting free donations from community businesses.
- Teachers from Seattle Alternative School #1 use corporate partnerships to get hundreds of dollars' worth of free materials for art, science, history, and drama projects. The educators explain how these donations help to fund an innovative experiential learning program.

To order this book or other books from the Teacher-to-Teacher series, visit the NEA Professional Library at www.nea.org/books or call 800-229-4200.

Take Your Job Hunt to Cyberspace

FROM "J IS FOR JOB" ON PAGE 20.

Whether you're new to the profession or looking for a change in your teaching position, these Web sites can help you in your job search. For more information on employment in education, check out "J is for Job," on page 20.

TEACHERS-TEACHERS.COM

This free service allows applicants to post their résumés online, search for jobs by location, receive news about available teaching positions, and send application materials electronically. Go to www.teachers-teachers.com.

RECRUITING NEW TEACHERS, INC.

RNT works to bolster the teaching profession, expand the pool of qualified teachers, and promote strategies for effective teacher recruitment, development, and retention. At the Web site, prospective teachers will find quick access to resources such as a national job bank (searchable by state), links to financial aid programs, and information about state requirements for licensure and certification. Go to www.rnt.org.

GREATTEACHER.NET

This Web site offers a free service that allows applicants to search for teaching openings by geographical location. Each ad includes a job description and contact information. Applicants also can post their résumés online at the site. Visit www.greatteacher.net.

EDUTECH

This site offers search engines that sort jobs by location, category, and job title. You'll also find information on job fairs, the latest job postings, and frequently asked questions about issues prospective teachers face. Go to www.edutech-1.com.

TEACHINGJOBS.COM

This site maintains information on thousands of available positions in schools in the United States and overseas. Job seekers can receive newsletters and updates by e-mail about the most recent job openings at www.teachingjobs.com.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR EMPLOYMENT IN EDUCATION

AAEE provides information to college career centers, school districts, and teacher candidates about the education job market. On the site, preservice teachers will find job hunt publications, links to online job databases, and information on teacher certification. Check out the annual supply and demand report for information about the need for teachers in your field. Go to www.aaee.org.

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, a branch of the U.S. Department of Labor, collects and distributes data about the current job market. Every two years, the Bureau releases a revised *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, which includes detailed job descriptions, information on working conditions, training and education required, wage estimates, and future job prospects for a variety of occupations. Search the handbook online and find statistical information on education employment at www.bls.gov.

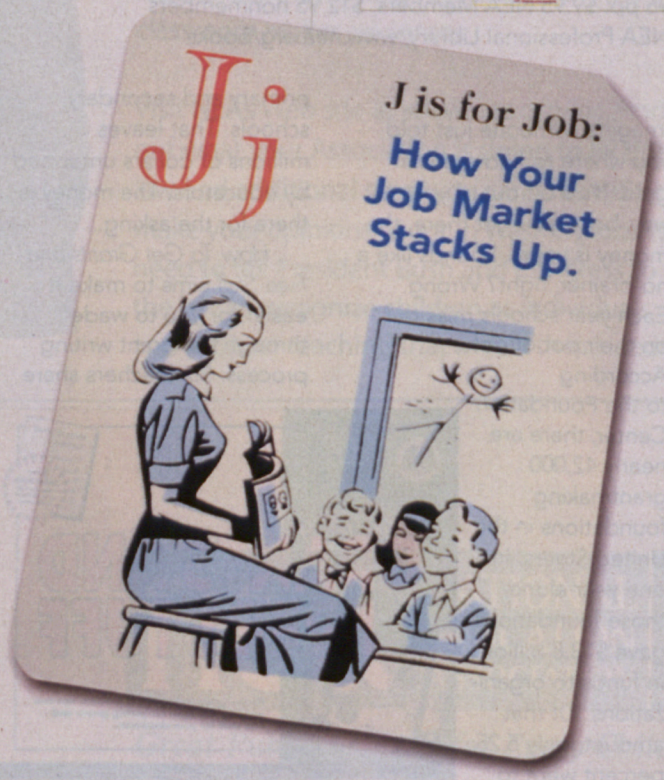

ILLUSTRATION: CSA IMAGES

Grants and Awards

NEA FRIEND OF EDUCATION AWARD NOMINATIONS DUE APRIL 2

The Friend of Education Award is the Association's highest honor and may be bestowed on an individual or organization whose leadership acts or support have significantly benefited education, education employees, or students **on a national scale**. Nominations for the NEA Friend of Education Award are due April 2, 2004.

Letters of nomination must include:

- Name of the nominee
- Nominee's position and/or organizational affiliation
- Nominee's mailing address (or organization mailing address)
- Name of the nominator or affiliate
- Signature of nominator or affiliate officer
- Name of nominator's local affiliate, if applicable
- Nominator's mailing address
- Nominator's telephone number

If the nominator is an NEA member, send proof of membership (such as an *NEA Today* mailing label that includes a membership number).

In 100 words or less, indicate the reason for your nomination and summarize the nominee's qualifications for the award. Nominees will be evaluated based on leadership, acts, and support of education on a national scale. Supporting materials, such as publications or videos, may be submitted along with the nomination information.

Submit all nomination information and materials to: NEA Friend of Education Award Committee; Executive Office; Attn: Da'aiyah Bilal-Threats. National Education Association; 1201 16th Street, N.W.; Washington, DC 20036. Nomination information may also be faxed to 202-822-7012.

TECH GRANTS FOR ESPS

Has your local Association applied for an ESP Technology Grant yet? Well, time's running out to make the April 15 deadline. NEA offers technology grants in the amounts of $250 to $3,500 to local education support professional Associations. These ESP Technology grants provide an opportunity for ESP locals to involve members in the application of technology in projects that could help their locals, schools, and/or communities.

The application process is open to all NEA local Associations that have not been awarded an ESP Technology Grant in the past three years. (Individuals are ineligible for awards).

Grants are awarded, in part, based on the integration of the ESPIS—the ESP Information System created to provide ESP members and staff immediate and widespread opportunities to share data and information throughout all levels of the organization. The ESPIS includes, for example, the ESP Web site, the ESP Listserv, the ESP Data Book, and a variety of publications.

Other considerations when awarding grants include the level of involvement of ESP members and the merits of the proposed goals and projected outcomes. The proposed project's contribution to achieving the NEA Strategic Focus of restoring public confidence in public education and the completeness of the application form are also important factors.

ESPIS and the Technology Grant Program are overseen by a User Advisory Group comprising governance and staff who are available to provide training on the use of ESPIS.

For more information, go to www.nea.org/esphome/members/howtoapp.html or contact the ESP program assistant in NEA's ESP Quality Department: 202-822-7131, 1201 16th Street N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

COLLEGE HELP FROM THE BROWN FOUNDATION

The Brown Foundation for Educational Equity, Excellence and Research offers financial support for minority education majors enrolled or enrolling in college. Entering freshmen may apply for the Lucinda Todd Book Award Scholarship, a one-time, nonrenewable book grant of $300. Students entering their junior year of college may apply for the Brown Foundation Academic Scholarship, a $500 award per year for two academic years. For eligibility criteria and application procedures, go to http://brownvboard.org/foundatn/sclrbroc.htm or contact the Brown Foundation at 214 W. 6th, Ste. 306, Topeka, KS 66603; 785-235-3939; brownfound@juno.com. Applications must be received by March 30.

ECOLOGY CURRICULUM GRANTS

The Melinda Gray Ardia Environmental Foundation offers Environmental Curriculum Development Grants—one to two $1,000 grants designed to assist educators in the design and implementation of holistic environmental curricula. Preference is given to grants that benefit public school students. The foundation prefers to support the actual development of a curriculum rather than provide funds to purchase equipment. All funds pass through the school district or nonprofit organization rather than directly to the individual recipients. Curricula that encourage the integration of multiple disciplines (such as integrating art and science), and which include cooperative work with multiple school districts, will be given special consideration.

To ensure that curricula are implemented, the Foundation will require a letter of endorsement from the science supervisor and/or principal of the school(s) involved to validate applications.

To apply, submit a formal proposal that includes:

1. Detailed goals and objectives of the curriculum that indicate its focus, mission, and/or philosophy
2. A budget
3. A letter of endorsement from the science supervisor and principal of the school involved or any other partners involved
4. A timetable of when work will be conducted and completed

Grants *continues on next page*

ILLUSTRATION TOP: PHOTOSPIN; ILLUSTRATION RIGHT: BRUCE WORTHINGTON

What's Up at HIN

Help Create Asthma-Friendly Schools!

Did you know that at least two children in every class have asthma, and that asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism? Alarmingly, students miss approximately 14 million days of school per year because of asthma. To increase awareness about the asthma epidemic, the American School Health Association has recently published *Health in Action: Asthma-Friendly Schools are Healthier for Everyone* Vol. 2, No. 2. The publication includes tools, tips, and resources on asthma education and the basics for establishing an asthma-friendly school environment. You may purchase the publication for $10 by visiting https://ssl.websites2000.com/ashaweb/bulkorder.html. To learn more about asthma, visit www.asthmaandschools.org.

National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

Every year in this country, close to 850,000 teenage girls become pregnant. The consequences of these pregnancies are enormous, as only one-third of these girls complete high school. To raise awareness about this troubling issue, NEA is once again a partner in the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy on **May 5, 2004**. Teens can go online and take an engaging "quiz" that presents them with real life scenarios around the issue. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, sponsor of the event, has materials available to help you promote this important day in your community. For more information or to order materials, visit www.teenpregnancy.org/national/ or call 202-478-8500.

Fitness Challenge Team Update

The NEA fitness challenge, a joint venture of NEA HIN and *NEA Today*, has been successfully helping members to stay fit and healthy. Since October, 14 teams have joined the fitness challenge and have lost an average weight of 25 pounds per team. The fitness challenge provides a platform for teams to receive expert advice and to share experiences, success stories, and motivation. Congratulations and good luck to our Fitness Challenge Teams! To learn more or to join the NEA Fitness Challenge today, visit www.neafitness.org/home.htm.

Home Financing Without the Homework

Now you can buy or refinance a home the easy way! The NEA Home Financing Program®, provided exclusively by Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, offers great rates, exceptional service, a quick application and a decision within minutes. Take advantage of a wide array of options:

- **Buy, build or refinance**
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- **Vacation and investment properties**

You'll earn "extra credit" with the NEA Getaway℠ – a complimentary 3-day/2-night hotel stay after closing on a new mortgage or refinance.[2]

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Mon.– Fri. 8:00 a.m. – midnight; Sat., 9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., ET

Home Equity: Mon. – Fri., 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., ET

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NEA HOME FINANCING PROGRAM® ... HELPING TO MAKE DREAMS AFFORDABLE.

[1]Home equity financing provided by Wells Fargo Banks. Members FDIC. ©2004 Wells Fargo Banks. All Rights Reserved. **Home equity lines of credit secured by homestead properties are not available in Texas.** [2]**Transportation not included with the getaway.** Offer valid for new purchase or refinance mortgage loan applications taken and closed through June 30, 2004 through this program. This offer is available for first mortgages through Wells Fargo Home Mortgage and not available on home equity loans and lines of credit and cannot be combined with any other program or offer. Contact your mortgage consultant for additional details, terms and conditions. The offer is administered by BI, which is not affiliated with Wells Fargo Home Mortgage and is subject to change without notice. The benefits of the **NEA Home Financing Program®** cannot be combined with any other offer. NEA Home Financing Program is a registered mark and NEA. Getaway is a service mark of NEA's Member Benefits Corp. Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Inc. originates mortgage loans in New Hampshire under License No. 5757 MB for first mortgages and License No. 5768 MHL for second mortgages and is a New Jersey Department of Banking Licensed Mortgage Banker. ©2004 Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Information is accurate as of date of printing and is subject to change without notice. Credit subject to approval. 3/04 **Branches DM# DMCNEAHOTEL**

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On TV

JANE GOODALL'S RETURN TO GOMBE

Animal Planet, *March 8, 8 p.m., ET.*
This one-hour special presents an intimate portrait of Dr. Jane Goodall, the legendary scientist known for her pioneering study of wild chimpanzees. The program will capture Goodall's thoughts and emotions as she goes back to Gombe, a place in the East African country of Tanzania where she began her work more than 40 years ago to redefine the relationship between humans and animals. She searches for the "F" family of chimps made famous by her books, TV shows, and films, hoping to find Gremlin, the mother of the only two surviving chimpanzee twins in Gombe. Goodall continues to travel 300 days a year to raise awareness about chimpanzees.

BIOGRAPHY

A&E
Celebrate Women's History Month with *Biography* series episodes profiling notable women. Shows may be taped and used in the classroom for one year with teaching materials available at www.aetv.com/class. All shows air at 7 a.m., ET. "Amelia Earhart: Queen of the Air," March 1; "Barbara Bush: First Mom," March 2; "Rosa Parks: Mother of a Movement," March 9; "Eleanor Roosevelt: A Restless Spirit," March 10; "Gloria Steinem: Ms. America," March 15; "Hillary Rodham Clinton: Changing the Rules," March 16; "Katharine Graham: Pillar of the Post," March 18; "Helen Thomas: The First Lady of the Press," March 19; "Karen Silkwood: A Life on the Line," March 22.

AFRICA TODAY

Discovery Channel, *March 1, 9 a.m., ET.*
A look at students in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania, the daily activities of an Ethiopian girl, the impact of AIDS on the people of Africa, and the effects of deforestation in Ghana and oil drilling in Nigeria. The hour-long program can be taped and used in the classroom for one year.

TLC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL—EARTH'S CHANGING SURFACE

The Learning Channel, *March 5, 6 a.m., ET, check local listings.*
Designed for grades K–6, this series consists of segments edited from original documentaries. This episode, "Earth's Changing Surface," explores an innovative mapmaking technology, soil formation in the American prairie, and the geologic history of the Grand Canyon. Can be taped and used in the classroom for two years.

WILD WEST TECH

The History Channel, *March 30, 10 p.m., ET.*
"CSI meets *The Lone Ranger,"* might describe this new series. Actor Keith Carridine hosts the program, which looks at how the lawless used technology to open safes, shoot accurately from long distances, and get away with the help of a good horse. The evolution of new techniques to trap and hunt down these gunslingers is also presented, which makes for a fair, balanced, and just plain fun show. Viewers get a real glimpse of 19th-century American life, which fifth-grade teachers will especially appreciate. Topics for other episodes include Cowboy Tech, Military Tech, Execution Tech, Hunting Tech, and Train Tech.

THE GREAT CAMPAIGN OF 1960

PBS, *March 22, check local listings for times.*
A survey of the presidential campaign of 1960 between Democratic candidate John F. Kennedy and Republican candidate Richard M. Nixon, the first national election campaign in which television and the Catholic religion played a major role. Can be taped and used in the classroom for one year.

HONG KONG SYMPHONY: HEAVEN-EARTH-MANKIND

Ovation, *March 23, 12 p.m., ET, check local listings.*
Composer Tan Dun and cellist Yo-Yo Ma celebrate the passing of Hong Kong from British to Chinese rule in this one-hour program, which can be taped and used in the classroom for one year with teaching materials from www.ovationtv.com/artszone.

INDEPENDENT LENS: THE NEW AMERICANS

PBS, *March 29–31, 9 p.m., ET, check local listings.*
This series follows refugees and immigrants from five different countries, documenting their preparations as they travel to America, for work, for love, for safety. From Steve James, director of *Hoop Dreams,* these stories introduce us to Barine, a Nigerian mother of four, who moves to Chicago and works three part-time jobs to make ends meet. Other subjects include baseball players from the Dominican Republic, a computer programmer from India, a Palestinian woman, and a Mexican father of six. Episode 1 (March 29) establishes the backgrounds of the travelers and reveals their hopes for a better life in America. Episode 2 (March 30) shows how they confront the culture shock of modern, urban life. The last evening completes the tale of transition. *The New Americans* condenses four years in the lives of these hopeful people. Check out Web components for the series at www.pbs.org/newamericans and at www.itvs.org/outreach/newamericans.

On TV listings are provided by KIDSNET, a national resource for children's media in Washington, D.C., www.kidsnet.org and by Cable in the Classroom's Access Learning *magazine at www.ciconline.org.*

PHOTOS FROM TOP LEFT: MICHAEL NEUGEBAUER; GETTY; JEFF FOOTT/DCI; PHOTO RIGHT COURTESY OF KARTEMQUIN/EDUCATIONAL FILMS/ITVS

On the Web

WOMEN'S HISTORY RESOURCES

Biographies of notable women, history quizzes and timelines, and classroom activities pepper this Thompson Gale site honoring Women's History Month. Visitors can also find links to other Women's history resources. Go to www.galegroup.com/free_resources/whm/index.htm.

MARCH INTO WOMEN'S HISTORY

Visit www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr058.shtml for an overview of Women's History Month as well as links to lesson plans and other useful sites for teaching about women's issues and contributions to U.S. history.

PROFILES OF WOMEN

Looking for brief but informative bios of famous women? Then check out the History Channel's Women's History Exhibit pages boasting more than 30 profiles and an online feature on women's suffrage. Go to www.historychannel.com/exhibits/womenhist/main.html.

STREAM STUDIES

This Environmental Protection Agency site provides lessons and activities for studying how runoff affects streams, how to analyze what's upstream and downstream from your community, and how families can reduce "nonpoint source" pollution, which results from rainfall or snow melt moving over and through the ground. The site is especially geared toward middle school science teachers and students. Go to www.epa.gov/owow/nps/nps_edu/index.html.

¡SOY UNICA! ¡SOY LATINA!

This bilingual English-Spanish site provides information to help Hispanic/Latina girls ages 9–14 enhance decision-making and communication skills. The site, www.soyunica.gov/, hosted by the Department of Health and Human Services and offers visitors homework

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Montana
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More States Coming Soon...

Homeowner insurance currently not available in Florida. Discount rates may not be available in Oregon, New Mexico or Tennessee.

Are we there yet?

State by state, we're bringing discount auto insurance to America's educators.

As a member of the NEA, you can qualify for *NEA Members Auto & Home Insurance Program*, an outstanding plan with discount rates negotiated exclusively for you.

For more than 50 years, *A+ Auto & Home Insurance Plus* has been creating unique plans for education professionals.

Over the next couple of years, we'll be bringing our plans to educators across America. Check to see if we're in your state. With just one call, you could save hundreds of dollars a year.

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Protecting America's educators for over 50 years.

Call for a fast, free quote today, toll-free: 1-866-680-5141.

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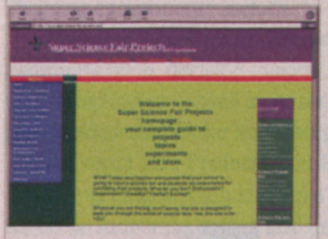
tips, ways to explore family history and their futures, and information on a new Latina role model each month. Free activity books and posters may also be ordered.

SUPER SCIENCE FAIR PROJECT HELP

Completing science fair projects can be a lengthy and complicated process. Madeline Binder, a Chicago-area educator, has developed an interactive site to make science projects more enjoyable and less difficult. Binder has created Detective ThinkMore, a cartoon character that guides visitors through the complexities of science fair projects at www.super-science-fair-projects.com.



GET MORE FROM CABLE

Cable in the Classroom's new professional development site helps educators become familiar with cable's content, broadband technology, and educator technology resources. Visitors can view multimedia case studies of teachers using technology successfully in their classrooms, as well as link to television schedules, state and national standards, and other education resources. Go to www.ciconline.org/Enrichment/Development.

JOLLY OLD ENGLAND—ONLINE

Want to go on a virtual trip to Britain? Http://BritainUSA.com/4kids, maintained by the British Embassy, includes everything from history and geography information to a picture gallery of London and surrounding areas. The site also features activities kids can do if they visit London, and a sports section detailing the more popular sports in England today. A guide for teachers and students is also included, which may be useful for students working on related research projects.

HANGIN' WITH YAK

Published by the Detroit Free Press, *Yak's Corner*, a magazine aimed at kids, now has an online version at www.yakscorner.com/yakfront.htm. The site contains plenty of activities, including a recipes section, an arts and crafts section, profiles of celebrities, and news and tips kids would be interested in. In addition, you can find teacher guides that assist in every section covered by the site.

Heads Up From NEA Member Benefits

NEA-SPONSORED ACCOUNTS

Get the most out of your membership by opening an NEA-Sponsored Deposit account with yields that have consistently ranked among the highest in the nation. Both the NEA-Sponsored CD and Money Market accounts are FDIC-insured up to $100,000 per depositor, so you can sleep easy while your money grows. The NEA-Sponsored CD account can be opened with $1,000 and has flexible terms ranging from 6 to 60 months. The NEA-Sponsored Money Market account can be opened with $500, and you can make up to six withdrawals or transfers per monthly statement period, three of which can be made by check. For this week's member-only rates or to open an account, call MBNA at 1-800-457-2258 and mention priority code JA0AV. Or visit www.neamb.com/deposits. Member FDIC.

GOT THE FEVER?

If the thought of spring break makes you yearn for cheerier climes, test the brakes on a fine, no-hassle vehicle through the NEA Car Rental Program®. Reserve a car, SUV, or minivan from Hertz or Alamo and enjoy superior savings and special discounts. At most locations, you'll also get unlimited mileage, no additional driver fee for spouse or domestic partner, and coupons for special deals—just for being an NEA member! Simply go to www.neamb.com and click on Special Discount Programs. Once on the NEA Car Rental Program page, you can make a reservation online. Or call in your reservation to Hertz at 1-800-654-2210 (provide member code CDP# 50655), or to Alamo, 1-800-354-2322 (discount ID# 613575, Rate Code BY). Happy travels!

NEA members have saved more than $3.7 billion in their NEA-Sponsored CD and Money Market accounts.

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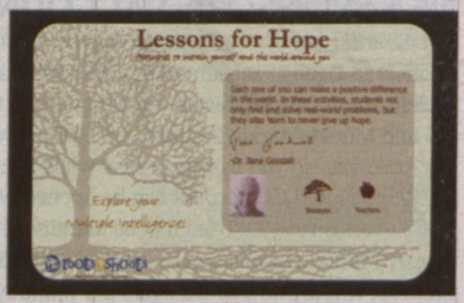
Take Note

Online Lessons for Hope



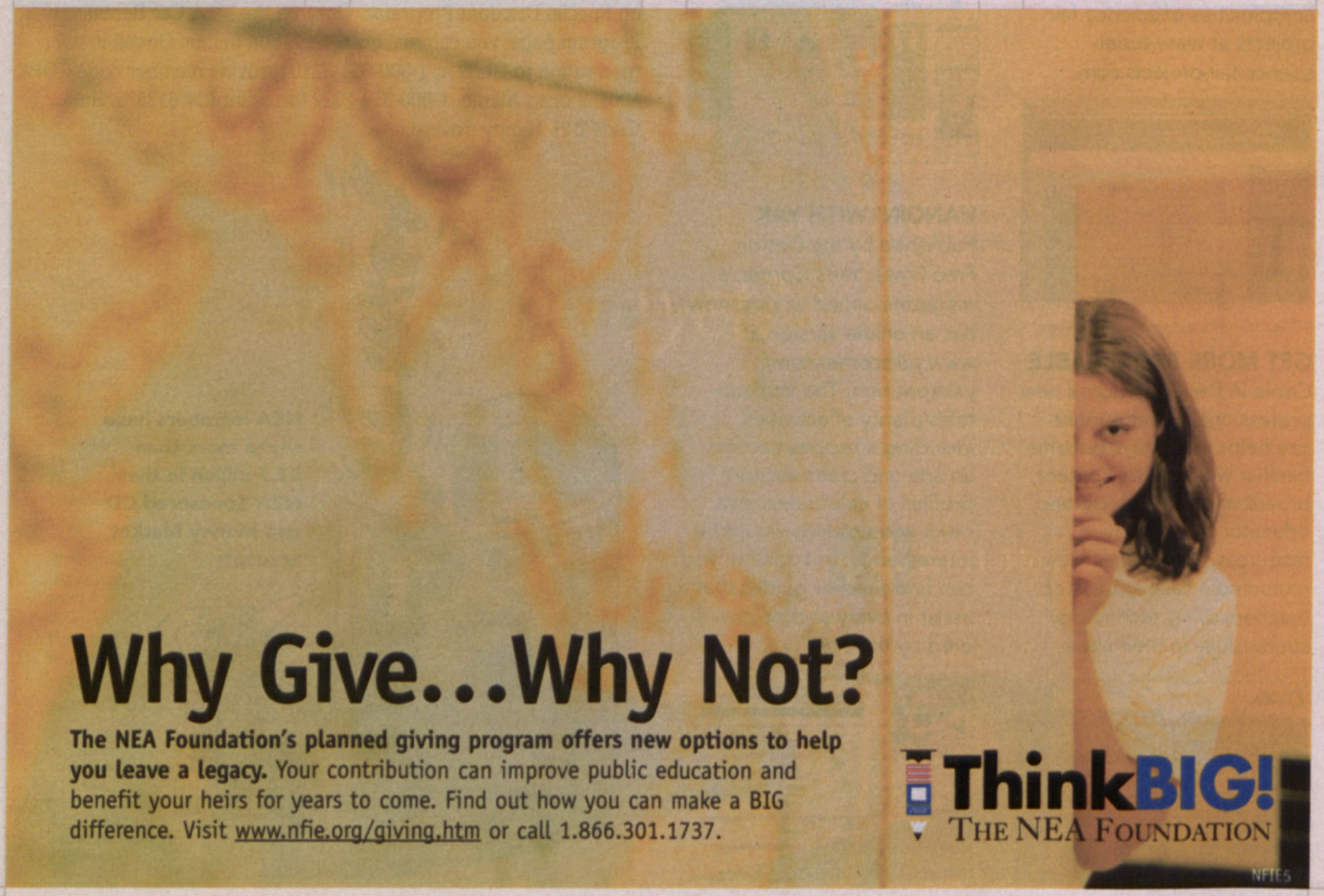
"Lessons For Hope" is a Web-based project written by the Jane Goodall Institute and produced by the Center for Applied Technologies in Education at the University of Buffalo. The high school curriculum materials—including pilot-tested lesson plans, student materials, teacher guides, and charts relating each lesson to national standards in science and other subjects—are available for free at www.lessonsforhope.org. The lesson plans parallel Goodall's work with chimpanzees and her newer efforts to help children become citizens of the world, taking care of both animals and people in their communities and abroad. As students learn Goodall's life story, they examine their own lives and their communities. The course activities give students an opportunity to apply these life lessons in order to empower them to make a positive contribution in the world. See page 38 for an *NEA Today* interview with Jane Goodall. For more on her work, visit www.janegoodall.org.

ESP Quality Workforce Series

NEA's ESP Quality Department has released the final two publications in its *Building A Quality Workforce Series*—a series highlighting the challenges members of each ESP job group face, including job descriptions, downsizing, health and safety issues, and professional development. ***Technical Services*** gives an overview of the challenges faced by ESPs in this area, including mastering new technology, federal and state statutes, time management, and ambiguous reporting structures. ***Security Services*** highlights the tasks of ESPs working in security, such as protecting individuals from intolerance and guarding against larger crises, while facing a shortage in equipment and training resources. Read these publications online or download them in PDF format from www.nea.org/esphome/nearesources/index.html. You can also request a hard copy by contacting the ESP Quality Program, Attention: Program Assistant, Suite 410, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036; 202-822-7131; ESP.Program@nea.org.

Free magazine subscription? YES!

Are your students ready for some good news? Then sign up for a free, one-year subscription to YES!, an award-winning ad-free national journal filled with inspiring case studies of practical solutions to a broad range of environmental and social justice challenges. Published quarterly by the Positive Futures Network, an independent, nonprofit organization, YES! can help inform students about ecological and social problems while providing solutions and


Why Give...Why Not?
The NEA Foundation's planned giving program offers new options to help you leave a legacy. Your contribution can improve public education and benefit your heirs for years to come. Find out how you can make a BIG difference. Visit www.nfie.org/giving.htm or call 1.866.301.1737.
ThinkBIG!
THE NEA FOUNDATION

channels for constructive action. For more information or to sign up, go to www.yesmagazine.org/education/teacheroffer.cfm.

New Online Newsletter for Priority Schools

A new electronic newsletter and discussion group—CAREshare—supports NEA members in their work to meet the needs of all students, particularly students in priority schools and schools not making adequate yearly progress under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Each month, subscribers receive an electronic newsletter that includes examples of what educators are doing around the country to improve teaching and learning conditions in their schools, promotes dialogue among educators, and shares research and best practices particularly applicable to struggling learners.

Each edition includes information about one of the "CARE" themes—culture, abilities, resilience, and effort—and features practical classroom applications. Participants will be encouraged to post success stories and engage in discussions about the shared information. NEA Human and Civil Rights Department staff will moderate the newsletter and discussion as part of the "C.A.R.E. for Priority Schools" project. To join CAREshare, e-mail mgreen@nea.org. For more information, contact Linda Bacon at lbacon@nea.org or 202-822-7724.

Women's Leadership Training

The NEA Human and Civil Rights Department offers the Women's Leadership Training Program to all members to support increased women's participation and leadership at all levels of the Association. Training components include:

Personal Assessment Leadership Skills (PALS)—focuses on communication, decision making, and skills for entering the NEA leadership ranks, as well as Association structure, basic information, goals and strategies for leadership attainment.

Personal and Professional Decision-Making Skills (PPDMS)—gives emerging women leaders a systematic, decision-making model based on individual values and how those values relate to the Association.

Group Process Skills (GPS)—provides a diverse group of Association leaders with extensive practice in leadership experiences and skills such as listening, attending, and responding to member needs as well as developing inclusive organizational goals and programs.

Organizational Analysis Skills (OAS)—helps experienced Association women leaders establish their own leadership development curriculum in the Association. Participants learn about power and decision making and become familiar with governance tools, such as budget analysis and parliamentary procedure.

Campaigning To Win (CTW)—gives women the tools and skills they need to make informed decisions about running for office and conducting a successful campaign.

Each training is conducted over a two- to three-day period and is offered through the state affiliates. CTW workshops are given nationally once a year in the fall. Workshops are conducted by a national cadre of peer trainers. For information on upcoming trainings, or to find out how to have trainings in your state, contact: Pam Rios, Human and Civil Rights, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC, 20036-3290; 202-822-7700. Upcoming trainings include:

- March 5–6: PALS and GPS, Unity Conference, MEA, Lansing, Michigan
- March 5–7: PPDMS, New Mexico Education Association, Albuquerque
- March 12–14: PALS, Vermont Education Association, Burlington
- March 14–17: OAS, Indianapolis Education Association, Indianapolis
- June 15–18: PALS, Idaho Education Association, Boise

Help Stop Bullying

NEA's National Bullying Awareness Campaign aims to reduce, and eventually eradicate, bullying in America's public schools. Research indicates that this goal can best be achieved by fostering the active involvement of teachers, administrators, school support personnel, parents, and the community. Your school can be a part of this campaign. NEA has a national cadre of trainers who can train members and assist the district in developing a Whole School Bullying Prevention/Intervention Program at no cost to the school district. For more information, contact Gaye Barker at 202-822-7732 or gbarker@nea.org. For tips on how to handle and prevent bullying for parents and students, visit www.nea.org/schoolsafety/bullying.html.

DIVERSITY CALENDAR

MARCH

MARCH 1–31—WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

A month started to celebrate women's involvement in history and their contributions to American culture. For more, visit the National Women's History Project site at www.nwhp.org.

MARCH 1—KOREAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT DAY

On this day, Koreans commemorate the anniversary of the independence movement against colonial Japanese rule in 1919. The Korean Declaration of Independence is normally read.

MARCH 16—FIRST BLACK NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED

In 1827, the *Freedom's Journal*, the United States' first Black newspaper, was published in New York City.

APRIL

APRIL 12—ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST MAN IN SPACE

In 1961, Yuri Gagarin made history when he orbited the Earth in the spacecraft *Vostok I*, launched by the Soviet Union. The voyage lasted 1 hour, 48 minutes.

APRIL 18—PAUL REVERE'S RIDE ANNIVERSARY

Paul Revere began his famous "midnight" ride around 10 p.m. on this date in 1775.

APRIL 22—EARTH DAY

This day is set aside for environmental education and renewing the commitment to promoting the environmental health of Earth. For more, visit www.earthday.net.

Hurry, Hurry!

BY CLYDIA FOREHAND

"Hurry up, children; don't lag behind."
"Please face the front; please stay in line."
"We've all got to hurry. We must take a test"
"And hope we are better than even the best."

'Way at the back, a young girl on her knees
Was not facing front; she was looking at leaves.
There on the ground, she held one to see
She looked at it closely; looked up at the trees.

"Miss Giffrey, Miss Giffrey, could you tell me how"
"This leaf is so different from that one. Right now?"
"Miss Giffrey, Miss Giffrey, I just want to know"
"Why do leaves fall?" And "How do trees grow?"

Miss Giffrey was saddened; she wanted to teach.
She wanted to show them the veins in the leaf
The wonders of chlorophyll; osmosis, too.
Instead she said, "Please do as I asked you to."

The child put the leaf down and stood in the line.
They all had to hurry; it was almost time.
The schedules were set; the test was at nine.
"Hurry up, children; don't lag behind."

They all took the test; they did pretty well.
Their scores became data; not stories to tell.
Somebody, someplace, entered those scores
And somebody, someplace, compiled a report.

Miss Giffrey's and all other classes that year
Were ranked in an order that made it quite clear
Who were the winners and who was in trouble
And who'd better make better scores in the future.

Miss Giffrey did well; the report in the paper
Make her and her class and her school look quite able
To teach things that mattered; to make sure kids learned
And like every story, this one's pages turned.

The child in the back, who had looked at the leaf;
Been told not to dawdle; been taught not to see.
Grew to adulthood, a product of schools
That taught how to test and to follow the rules.

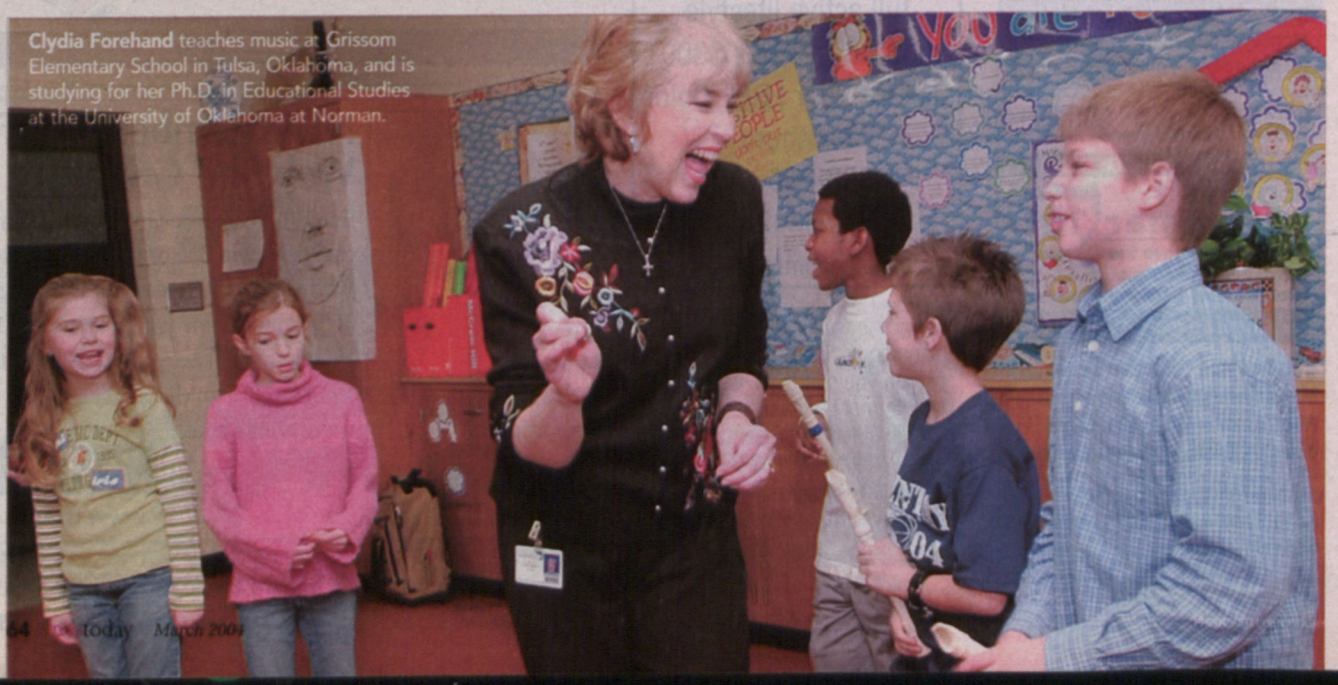
Miss Giffrey kept teaching; but teaching had changed
There were scripts now to follow. 'Please don't deviate.'
Said the words in bold print at the top of each page
'Take the lessons in order, teach the lessons the same.'

Test scores were rising, and, each year, believe me
Everyone said how much kids were achieving
"They're learning so much" People said to each other.
It's so good to know now that schools aren't in trouble.

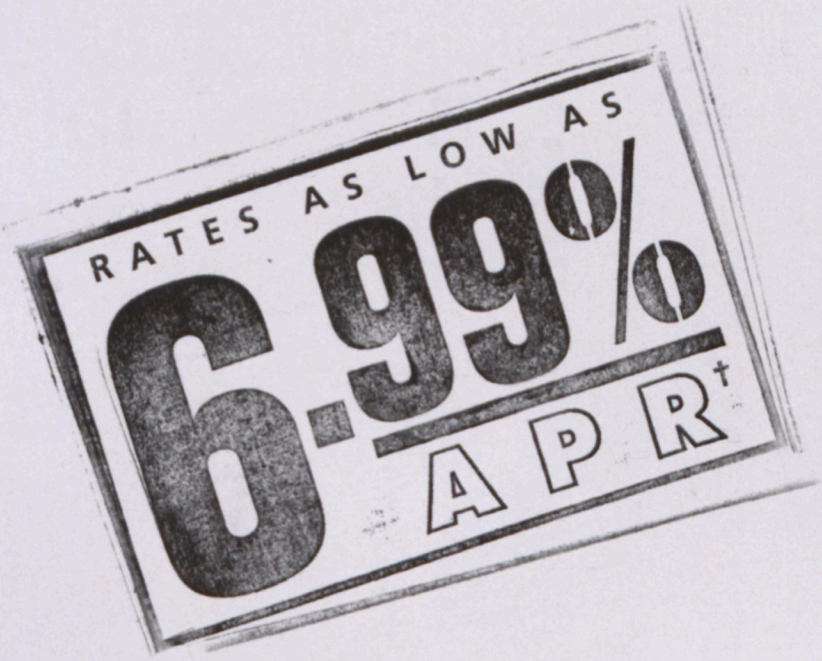
And Sarah, that young girl who'd once found the leaf,
Soon learned *not* to look; soon learned *not* to see.
Like everyone else, she walked in a line.
'Cause she had been taught she could *not* lag behind.

There are so many children, from so many places
To test for conformity really erases.
All that they are; all that they dream
All that they look for and all that they see.

Taught not to question; taught not to ask.
Stay in your seat; stick to the task.
Each one so different; each boy and each girl.
They are lag behind children in a hurry up world.



Clydia Forehand teaches music at Grissom Elementary School in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and is studying for her Ph.D. in Educational Studies at the University of Oklahoma at Norman.

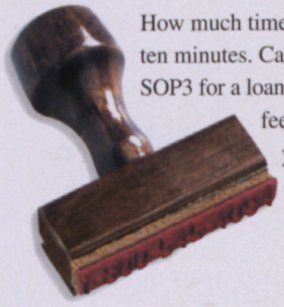


Help stamp out your debt with the NEA Personal Loan.

With rates as low as 6.99% APR† your debt†† could be gone before you know it. By making a modest monthly payment of $317 at our lowest APR of 6.99%, you could stamp out $10,000 of debt after just 36 months. It's that simple with the NEA Personal Loan®. So why not apply today?

The NEA Personal Loan offers you plenty of options. You can apply for the loan amount that works for you – from $3,000 to $25,000.* And, you can choose how much time you'd like to repay the loan – from 24 months to 84 months. Unlike other loans, this one requires no collateral, allows you to defer payments for 90 days,** (finance charges will accrue, repayment term starts after deferral period) and has no pre-payment penalties.

How much time does it take to apply to help stamp out your debt? Just ten minutes. Call MBNA at 1-800-545-4094 and mention priority code SOP3 for a loan decision right over the phone. Why live with the uneasy feeling of being in debt? Call this number today to apply and you could start making your debt disappear with the NEA Personal Loan.



NEA Personal Loan Estimated Monthly Payment Chart

Loan Amount	Term: 24 months	36 months	48 months	60 months	72 months	84 months
$3,000	$139	$96	$74	$62	N/A	N/A
$10,000	$460	$317	$246	$204	$176	N/A
$15,000	$690	$476	$369	$305	$263	$233
$25,000	N/A	$792	$615	$508	$438	$388

All payment amounts and terms are estimates based on an APR of 6.99%†. Your APR may be higher. See below for important APR disclosures.

nea Member Benefits
www.neamb.com

MBNA CONSUMER FINANCE

Call now to apply to help stamp out your debt:

1-800-545-4094

(TDD users, call 1-800-833-6262)

Priority code: **SOP3**

Monday-Thursday, 8am-10pm; Friday, 8am-8pm; and Saturday, 8am-5pm ET

†MBNA will set your Annual Percentage Rate (APR) between 6.99% and 17.99%, based on your creditworthiness. The APR is not guaranteed and may change; however, any APR change will not affect any balance on your account at the time of the change. In most cases, a change in the APR will restart your repayment term and change your minimum monthly payment. There is a 1% transaction fee for all advances on the account, including access checks, direct deposits and balance transfers (fee: min $2; max $10).

††MBNA may prohibit use of an NEA Personal Loan account to pay off or pay down another MBNA account.

*Receipt of maximum credit line is subject to creditworthiness standards.

**This account offers a 3-month payment deferral feature if you take an advance within the first three months. During the deferral period, no payment will be due. Finance charges will accrue. Your repayment term will start after the deferral period. You may pre-pay at any time without penalty.

The NEA is not involved in the credit decision process. All applications will be subject to a confidential standard review by MBNA America. The account is issued and administered by MBNA America Bank, N.A.

The NEA Personal Loan program has been developed for NEA members and their families only. Eligible NEA family members include parents, spouse (or domestic partner) and children. If a member decides not to renew membership, that person and his/her family will no longer be eligible to receive the preferred rates and fees offered through the NEA Personal Loan program. If eligible, a replacement loan may be offered.

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Absolutely NO membership dues are used to market this program.

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The NEA-Sponsored Certificate of Deposit

4.36% APY*

60-MONTH TERM
Valid 1/12/04-1/18/04
Minimum opening balance $1,000

Get above it all

The NEA has scouted the nation to find rates for its members that soar above the competition.

Shopping for the best yields you can find on a Certificate of Deposit is always a good idea. To help, the NEA has done the legwork for you and has determined that the NEA-Sponsored GoldCertificate® CD, offered by MBNA America Bank, provides competitive rates that have historically ranked among some of the highest in the nation.

The NEA-Sponsored CD is also FDIC-Insured up to $100,000 per depositor and offers terms ranging from 6 to 60 months. The low minimum opening deposit is just $1,000 (other banks may require more). It's the great rates and benefits that make the NEA-Sponsored CD so popular with NEA members and their families.†

So, get above it all,
open your own CD or IRA CD today!

Call MBNA at 1.800.457.2258 and mention priority code JA0AU
or visit www.neamb.com/cd

MBNA AMERICA®

nea Member Benefits
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FDIC

TERMS	NEA-Sponsored CD valid 1/12/04-1/18/04	Bank of America, Missouri valid 1/7/04	Bank One, Illinois valid 1/7/04	Citibank, New York valid 1/7/04
12 MONTHS	2.30% APY*	1.06% APY**	0.75% APY**	1.05% APY**
24 MONTHS	2.80% APY*	1.65% APY**	1.60% APY**	1.85% APY**
36 MONTHS	3.36% APY*	2.15% APY**	2.25% APY**	2.45% APY**
48 MONTHS	3.75% APY*	2.65% APY**	2.25% APY**	2.90% APY**
60 MONTHS	4.36% APY*	3.05% APY**	3.25% APY**	3.30% APY**

NEA YIELDS SHOWN ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WEEKLY. YIELDS ARE SHOWN FOR COMPARISON PURPOSES ONLY. PLEASE CALL MBNA FOR CURRENT NEA-SPONSORED CD RATES OR VISIT www.neamb.com/cd

*The NEA-Sponsored CD Annual Percentage Yields (APYs) for the terms shown are valid from 1/12/04 through 1/18/04, based on a $1,000 minimum opening balance, and assume that interest remains in the account until maturity. Penalty may be imposed for early withdrawal of CD principal. Withdrawals and fees may reduce earnings.

**All other bank APYs shown in the comparison chart are valid as of 1/7/04, based on balances of $1,000 and terms shown. Source–*Market Rates Insight*, 1/7/04.

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